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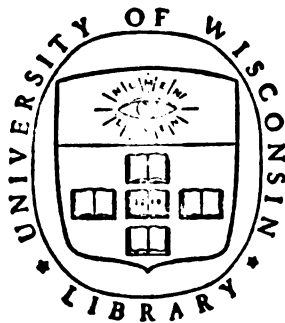
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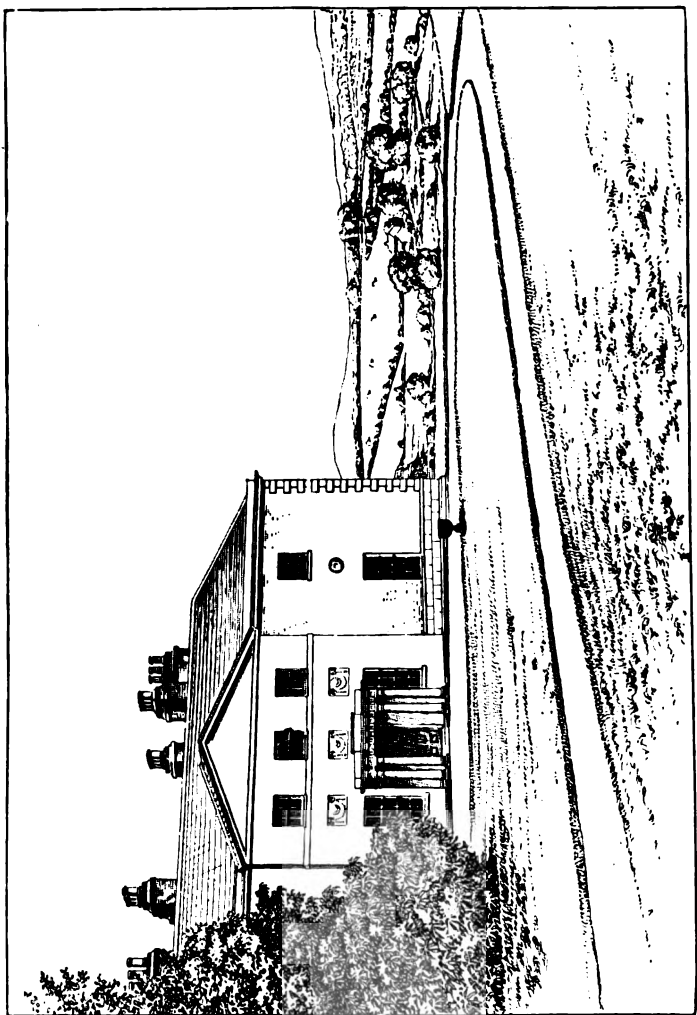


**CHARLES STEWART PARNELL**

**VOL. II.**







AVONDALE

THE LIFE  
OF  
CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

1846-1891

BY

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# THE LIFE

OF

## CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

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### CHAPTER XV

#### THE CRIMES ACT

THE Government of Lord Spencer soon became as odious as the Government of Lord Cowper had been. This was inevitable. No English governor can rule Ireland by coercion and win the popular favour. 'The question is,' said Lalor Sheil, 'do you wish to rule Ireland by putting yourselves in contact or in collision with the people?' It was the wish of Lord Spencer to rule Ireland by putting himself in contact with the people. But the Phoenix Park murders forced the Ministry to pass a Coercion Act,<sup>1</sup> which, in the words of Parnell, 'Lord Spencer administered up to the hilt.'

The beginning of the year 1883 was signalled by a series of blunders on the part of the Administration. Mr. Biggar had made a fierce attack upon the Viceroy.

<sup>1</sup> August 16, 1882. There was an autumn session of Parliament in 1882, when the closure, the most effective measure hitherto taken against obstruction, was passed.

Proceedings were taken against him. He was committed for trial. Then the prosecution was suddenly dropped. Mr. William O'Brien published a seditious libel in 'United Ireland.' He was prosecuted and was sent for trial. The jury disagreed, and he was discharged. Davitt and Healy were sentenced to six months' imprisonment because they refused to find sureties to keep the peace. They were discharged at the end of three months.<sup>1</sup>

All these measures, feeble in their 'strength,' served only to discredit the Government, to consolidate the Nationalists, to lessen the chances of a split, to improve the position of the Extremists, and to make it more difficult for Parnell to persevere in his efforts to keep the Kilmainham treaty.

<sup>1</sup> 'I delivered a very strong speech,' says Davitt, 'in view of the possible return of distress, and I threatened that if the Government did not undertake some public works I would call upon the starving peasantry of the west to march down on some fruitful lands which their ancestors were given to make room for cattle. I was prosecuted for that speech under a statute of Edward III., and sentenced to imprisonment or to find bail. I refused to find bail, and was sent to prison. I was released after three months.'—*Davitt's evidence before the Special Commission*, Qs. 86,906-7.

Mr. William O'Brien's article was entitled 'Accusing Spirits,' and it dealt with a subject which at the moment excited a good deal of popular interest. Four men had been hanged for the murder of the Joyces. One of these men, Myles Joyce, asseverated his innocence on the scaffold. The other three prisoners admitted their guilt, but declared in a paper (which had been submitted to the Lord Lieutenant) that Myles Joyce was innocent. Nevertheless he was hanged. Mr. O'Brien, expressing the popular view, denounced the Government as judicial murderers. Curiously enough the judge—the late Lord Justice Barry—who tried the prisoners was much impressed by the statement of the three men who asserted the innocence of Myles Joyce. 'The evidence against Myles Joyce,' he said subsequently to an Irish Q.C., 'seemed to me to be as strong as the evidence against the other prisoners, and yet I find it very difficult to believe that these three men (who did not deny their own guilt) should on the verge of the grave have insisted on the innocence of Myles Joyce if he were guilty too.' Rightly or wrongly, the people of the district believed in the innocence of Myles Joyce, and his execution made the Government intensely unpopular.

The Executive, however, showed more vigour in their pursuit of the Phoenix Park murderers. In January they were arrested. In February the public inquiry began. There was startling evidence; there were 'astounding revelations.' As the investigation proceeded Englishmen cherished the hope that proof of complicity in the crime would be brought home to the parliamentary party, perhaps to Parnell himself, and that the 'Home Rule bubble' would thus at length be effectually pricked. One of the murderers, James Carey, turned informer, and gave everyone away. Carey was a Home Ruler. He was personally known to several of the Irish members, one of whom had proposed him as a member of the Dublin Town Council. The knives with which the murders were committed had been concealed in the London office of the National League. They had been brought to Dublin by Mrs. Frank Byrne, the wife of the paid secretary of the English organisation. Byrne himself was *particeps criminis*.

These revelations whetted the English appetite, and every day the newspaper reports were eagerly scanned in the expectation of finding that the Irish members themselves were involved in the plots of the 'Invincibles.' 'This,' Sir William Harcourt is reported to have said, 'will take the starch out of the boys.'

Mr. Forster would have been more than human if he did not take advantage of the public excitement and the public sympathy—for the Phoenix Park inquiry proved that his life had been almost constantly in danger—to strike at Parnell, and even at the Ministry. An amendment to the Address (moved by Mr. Gorst), expressing the hope that the recent change in Irish

policy would be maintained, that no further concessions would be made to lawless agitators, and that the secret societies would continue to receive the energetic vigilance of the Government, gave him his chance.

On February 22 he came down to the House full of fight and bent on vengeance. He had been thrown over by Mr. Gladstone at the instigation of one of his colleagues in the Cabinet and under the skilful manipulation of Parnell, who had used the hostility of that colleague to accomplish his overthrow. He would now expose his enemies. He would show that the man with whom Mr. Gladstone had treated, with whom Mr. Chamberlain had intrigued, was the enemy of England, and the head of a lawless and rebellious agitation aimed at the very heart of the Empire. He had a popular theme, and he did it justice. His indictment of Parnell was trenchant and eloquent, pitched in a key which pleased old Whigs and delighted young Tories. The Opposition roared themselves hoarse with joy at every sentence, not merely because the oration was calculated to damage Parnell, but much more because it was calculated to bring discredit on the Government.

The whole Liberal party would have cheered vociferously too, but they felt that the ex-Chief Secretary was girding at their own leader as well as at the Irish 'rebel' whom they abhorred, and this consideration kept them in restraint. In the speech itself there was nothing new. It was, in fact, based on a pamphlet published some months before by Mr. Arnold Forster entitled 'The Truth about the Land League'—a pamphlet made up of extracts from the inflammatory and seditious speeches and newspaper articles of the Leaguers. Mr. Forster spoke from this brief,

and proved himself an able, an adroit, a vehement advocate. He certainly had a sympathetic jury to address, but he deserves the credit of having played upon their feelings, their passions, and their prejudices with complete success. The burden of the speech may be summed up in a sentence spoken by Mr. Gladstone himself on another occasion: 'Crime dogged the footsteps of the League.' For this crime, the 'outcome of the agitation,' Mr. Forster held Parnell, the leader 'of the agitation,' responsible. This was the gravamen of the indictment:

'My charge is against the hon. member for the city of Cork. . . . It has been often enough stated and shown by statistics that murder followed the meetings and action of the Land League. Will the hon. member deny and disprove that statement? I will repeat again what the charge is which I make against him. Probably a more serious charge was never made by any member of this House against another member. It is not that he himself directly planned or perpetrated outrages or murders, but that he either connived at them or, when warned, did not use his influence to prevent them.'

This was Mr. Forster's case. What thoughts passed through Parnell's mind while he sat listening to the indictment, hearing the wild cheers with which it was received, and watching the angry glances flashed at himself from almost every part of the House?

He stood arraigned of high crimes and misdemeanours at the bar of English public opinion. Of all the agitators he had been singled out as the chief criminal; he alone was to be cast to the lions. Yet what was the exact measure of his guilt? He was certainly the 'head of the organisation.' He had

favoured a 'forward policy,' united extreme and moderate men, kept the agitation at fever heat, and fanned the flame of discontent into a blaze which overwhelmed the enemies of his country. What was the result? A measure of reform which revolutionised the system of land tenure in Ireland, and, despite grave defects, gave the masses of the people a chance—long withheld—of working out their own salvation by honest labour and industrious exertion. He had certainly never acted 'police' for the British Government; he never would. He had never stretched forth a hand to arrest any movement tending to sap the foundation of British authority in Ireland, and he never would. Yet from the passing of the Land Act in 1881 to the hour of Mr. Forster's indictment his influence had been used to hold the Extremists in check; not, indeed, in the interests of England, not under the pressure of English opinion, but in the interest of Ireland, and under the pressure of the conviction that, for her sake, the time had come to slow down the agitation. He met with opposition in his own ranks, made enemies in America, ran the risk of disunion; nevertheless he was bent on playing the part of moderator when, in the autumn of 1881, he was attacked by the English Press, denounced by the Prime Minister, and flung into jail by Mr. Forster. On his release he took up the work of slowing down the agitation precisely where he had left it on the day of his arrest. He had made a treaty with the Prime Minister, and was doing all in his power to keep it, though the Prime Minister had thrown almost insurmountable obstacles in his way. Determined on a 'truce of God,' he had incurred the displeasure of Davitt, earned the enmity of the 'Irish World,' and

been constrained to dispense with the services of Mr. Dillon, Mr. Egan, and Mr. Brennan.

It was at this moment, when all his efforts were being used to keep the peace in Ireland, that Mr. Forster decided to hold him up to public odium as a criminal, with whom no honourable man could associate. But what was Mr. Forster, what was English opinion, to him? He had to think of his own countrymen, and of his own countrymen only. Mr. Forster's attack and the English cheers which welcomed it would serve him with them. That was the main fact. The answer to the Extremists, who called him a reactionary, would be Forster's speech; thus fortified he could moderate the agitation without exposing himself to the odious charge of Whiggery. He could hold them in check without forfeiting his reputation as an advanced politician; he could keep all the Nationalist forces together without breaking the treaty of Kilmainham. The expression—sometimes indifferent, sometimes scornful, sometimes sinister—which passed over his face while Mr. Forster was speaking faithfully reflected the thoughts within. Only for an instant did he show the least sign of emotion. It was when the late Chief Secretary said: 'It is not that he himself directly planned or perpetrated outrages and murders, but that he either connived at them, or, when warned——' 'It is a lie,' cried Parnell, darting a fierce glance at his antagonist, and relapsing again into silence. When Mr. Forster sat down, everyone expected that Parnell would spring to his feet to repel the charges hurled at him. But he quietly kept his seat. There was a painful pause, an awful silence. Parnell did not stir. The whole House swayed with emotion. His own party were touched by the scene and stung by the



onslaught made upon him ; he alone remained unmoved. ' Parnell, Parnell,' English members shouted again and again. A scornful smile was Parnell's only response. The discussion seemed about to collapse when an English member interposed to avert a division. The Irish members got around their Chief, and urged him to reply on the instant. He refused. His colleagues persevered. Finally he yielded to their importunities, and at the close of the night's proceedings moved the adjournment of the debate. ' He did not want to answer Forster at all,' says Mr. Justin McCarthy ; ' we had to force him.'

On February 23 the House met in a state of intense excitement. The approaches were thronged, the lobbies crowded, the galleries full ; members themselves had scarcely standing room. Among the distinguished strangers who looked down upon the scene the portly figure of the Prince of Wales and the refined, ascetic face of Cardinal Manning were conspicuous.

Parnell sat amongst his followers, calm, dignified, frigid, quietly awaiting the summons of the Speaker to resume the debate. It came. He rose slowly and deliberately, and in chilling, scornful accents began : ' I can assure the House that it is not my belief that anything I can say at this time will have the slightest effect on the public opinion of this House, or upon the public opinion of the country' (a pause) ; then, raising his head proudly, looking defiantly around, and speaking with marked emphasis : ' I have been accustomed during my political life to rely upon the public opinion of those whom I have desired to help, and with whose aid I have worked for the cause of prosperity and freedom in Ireland, and the utmost I desire to do in the very few words I shall address to the House is to

make my position clear to the Irish people at home and abroad.'

Every British member was disgusted with these opening sentences. The Irish 'prisoner' repudiated the jurisdiction of the court; there would be no apology, no explanation, no defence. 'Defiance' was the watchword of this incorrigible enemy. But the Irish members cheered as only Irish members can cheer. Parnell had struck a keynote which would reverberate throughout Ireland and America.

What was England to him or to them? Parnell in effect continued. Mr. Forster had asked many questions. What right had Mr. Forster to interrogate him? Who was Mr. Forster? A discredited politician, who had been repudiated by his own party, and whose administration of Ireland had been an ignominious failure. He (Parnell) had, forsooth, according to Mr. Forster, been deposed from his place of authority. If that were so, he had consolation in knowing that Mr. Forster had been deposed too. But the fact was that he (Parnell) still possessed the confidence of his fellow-countrymen, while Mr. Forster was left out in the cold. Upon what did the accusation against him rest? Upon speeches and newspaper articles, made or written by others, and which he had not even read. But it was idle for him to try to strike a responsive chord in that House.

'I say it is impossible to stem the torrent of prejudice that has arisen out of the events of the past few days. I regret that the officials charged with the administration of this Act are unfit for their posts. I am sure the right hon. gentleman, the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, must admit that to the fullest extent, and when he looks round on the right hon. member for Bradford, he must say, "Why am I

here while he is there?" Why was he (Mr. Forster) deposed—he, the right hon. gentleman who has acquired experience in the administration of Ireland—who, according to his own account, knew everything, although he was almost invariably wrong? Why was he deposed, and the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Trevelyan), a 'prentice, although a very willing hand, put in his position? I feel that the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant must say with the Scriptures, "I am not worthy to unloose his shoe latchet." It would be far better to have the Act administered by the seasoned politician now in disgrace and retirement. Call him back to his post; send him to help Lord Spencer in the congenial work of the gallows in Ireland. Send him to look after the secret inquisitions in Dublin Castle. Send him to distribute the taxes which an unfortunate and starving peasantry have to pay for crimes not committed by themselves. All this would be congenial work for the right hon. gentleman. We invite you to man your ranks, and to send your ablest and best men to push forward the task of misgoverning and oppressing Ireland. For my part I am confident as to the future of Ireland. Although the horizon may be clouded, I believe our people will survive the present oppression, as they have survived many and worse misfortunes, and although our progress may be slow, it will be sure. The time will come when this House and the people of this country will admit, once again, that they have been mistaken, and that they have been deceived by those who ought to be ashamed of deceiving them; that they have been led astray as to the right mode of governing a noble, a brave, a generous, and an impulsive people; that they will reject their present leaders, who are conducting them into the

terrible courses into which the Government appear determined to lead Ireland. Sir, I believe they will reject these guides and leaders with as much determination, and just as much relief, as they rejected the services of the right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford.'

When Parnell ended I was in the Lobby. There was a rush from the House. I met an English Liberal member. I asked, 'How has Parnell done?' He answered, 'Very badly. He has made no reply at all. He has ignored the whole matter, and says that he cares only for the opinion of Ireland; but it won't go down in this country.' Later on I met an Irish member. I said: 'What do you think of Parnell's speech?' He replied, 'Splendid! He just treated them in the right way; declined to notice Forster's accusations, said he cared only for Irish opinion, and that Ireland would stand by him. Quite right; that is the way to treat the House of Commons.'

The following account of the scene from the pen of a British politician of Cabinet rank is fair and judicial:

'Two things were remarkable about Mr. Parnell in the House of Commons—his calm self-control, and his air of complete detachment from all English questions, coupled with indifference to English opinion. Never were these more conspicuous than on the night when, at the beginning of the session of 1883, Mr. W. E. Forster, no longer bound by the trammelling reserve of office, delivered an elaborate and carefully prepared attack upon him. The ex-Chief Secretary had accumulated a number of instances of outrages, and incitement to outrage, perpetrated or delivered in Ireland, and of the language used from time to time by Irish members encouraging, or palliating, or omitting to

condemn these acts, and summed up his long indictment by arraiging Mr. Parnell as the author of these offences. Though far from being an eloquent speaker or an agreeable one to listen to, Mr. Forster was in his way powerful, putting plenty of force and directness into his speeches. On this occasion he was more direct and telling than I ever remember him; and it was easy to see that personal dislike and resentment, long pent up, entered into the indictment. Someone compared it to the striking of a man over the face with repeated blows of a whip, so much fierce vehemence burnt through it all. Everyone had listened with growing excitement and curiosity to see how Mr. Parnell would take it and what defence he would make.

‘Next day Parnell rose to reply, amid breathless silence, perfectly cool and quiet. He had shown no signs of emotion during the long harangue, and showed none now. To everyone’s astonishment he made no defence at all. With a dry, careless, and almost contemptuous air, he said that for all his words and acts in Ireland he held himself responsible to his countrymen only, and did not the least care what was thought or said about him by Englishmen.

‘By the judgment of the Irish people only did he and would he stand or fall.

‘These words, pronounced with the utmost deliberation in his usual frigid voice, but with a certain suppressed intensity beneath the almost negligent manner, produced a profound effect. Most were shocked and indignant. Those who reflected more deeply perceived what a gulf between England and Ireland was opened, or rather revealed as existing already, by such words. They saw, too, that as a

matter of tactics this audacious line was the best the Irish leader could take. What he had done could not be defended to such an audience as the House of Commons. The right course was, as lawyers say, "to plead to the jurisdiction," and to deny the competence of the House, as a predominantly English body, to judge him. Mr. Forster's speech did, of course, produce an effect on English opinion, and quotations were often made from it. But as Mr. Parnell could not have refuted many (at least) of its statements, he lost nothing by his refusal to meet them, and his defiance of English opinion both pleased his own friends and made the English feel the hopelessness of the situation. It wanted a strong will and great self-command, as well as perfect clearness of view, to hold this line under the exasperating challenges of Mr. Forster.

'Mr. Parnell was an extraordinary parliamentary tactician. Nobody except Mr. Gladstone surpassed him, perhaps nobody else equalled him. Mr. Gladstone was the only person he really feared, recognising in him a force of will equal to his own, an even greater fertility of resource.'

The Phoenix Park inquiry—the peg upon which Mr. Forster had hung his speech—was soon over. The prisoners were committed for trial. Five were hanged, nine were sent into penal servitude.

Of course the attempt to connect the Irish members with the crime failed utterly.

I had a conversation with Lord Spencer upon this subject, and upon the charge generally that Parnell and the Irish party helped to get up outrages.

He said: 'I never could get any trace that either he or any of his party were concerned in getting up outrages, and I stated this publicly in a speech at

Newcastle. I remember very well Parnell sending someone to me, I think it was Mr. Morley, on an occasion when he had been bitterly attacked in the House of Commons about crime, to let him know what I said in my Newcastle speech. I wrote out what I had said for him on a large sheet of foolscap paper.

'I went to the House of Commons the night that he was to defend himself. He was interrupted as he went along, and in the middle of this interruption he put his hand in his pocket and, greatly to my surprise, pulled out the sheet of paper on which I had written the extract from my speech for him, and then he read it right out to the House, just as I had written it. I think Parnell disliked crime, but he never publicly condemned it.'

About a month after Forster's attack Parnell introduced a Bill to amend the Land Act of 1881. Most of the provisions of this measure have since become law, but they were all scornfully rejected then.<sup>1</sup>

Some weeks later another measure of Irish significance was run through the House of Commons at a

<sup>1</sup> Whigs and Tories united in voting against the Bill, which was defeated by 250 to 63 votes. The provisions have been summarised by the *Annual Register* thus:

'The Bill provided for the inclusion of certain classes which were left out of the Act of 1881, such as the leaseholders and occupiers of town parks. It further proposed to extend the operation of the purchase clauses. The chief provisions of the measure were:

'1. The dating of the judicial rent from the gale day succeeding the application to fix the fair rent.

'2. Power to the court to suspend proceedings for ejection and recovery of rent pending the fixing of a fair rent on the payment by the tenant of a rent equal to the Poor Law valuation of his holding.

'3. A definition of the term "improvement" as any work or agricultural operation executed on the holding which adds to the value of the holding, or any expenditure of capital and labour on the holding which adds to its letting value.

'4. Direction to the court that, in fixing fair rent, the increase in the letting value of the holding arising from improvements effected by the tenant or his predecessor in title shall belong to the tenant, and the

single sitting. This was the Explosives Bill—Parliament's response to the dynamite plots of American Extremists. Parnell did not oppose the Bill. He wrote to Mr. Justin McCarthy :

*Parnell to Mr. Justin McCarthy*

‘ Monday.

‘ MY DEAR MCCARTHY,—I have been unable to go out of doors since I saw you on Friday, but am somewhat better to-day, and hope to be able to return to the House to-morrow (Tuesday). Please inform T. P. of this, as I should like to see him to-morrow.

‘ I do not know what the party have decided to do about the Explosives Bill, but I think it would be well not to oppose it on the first or second reading stage, but to confine ourselves to pointing out that it is far too wide and vague in its provisions and will require alteration in committee. If the Government desire to take the committee stage to-night, I do not think you ought to oppose them, as postponing it till to-morrow or Wednesday will only result in depriving us of opportunities for discussing two Irish questions of importance. However, I think the different stages of the Bill should be made to last throughout the evening until half-past twelve.

‘ As regards alterations in committee :

landlord shall not be permitted to ask for an increase of rent in respect of such increase of letting value.

‘ 5. The use and enjoyment by the tenant of his improvements shall not be held to be compensation for such improvement.

‘ 6. The presumption as regards the making of the improvement to be for the future in favour of the tenant.

‘ 7. Power given to leaseholders and to holders of town parks of applying to the court to fix a fair rent ; and, lastly, the Land Commission to be permitted to advance the full amount of purchase money, and in the case of holdings under 80l. the period of repayment is to be extended over 52 years instead of 35 years.’—*Annual Register*, 1888, p. 65.



' 1. It appears to me that the Bill is not retrospective in its character, but if there is any doubt about it an amendment should be moved so as to ensure that it shall *not* be retrospective; otherwise this point had best not be alluded to by us.

' 2. The second clause should be amended so as to secure that the explosion of cartridges or gunpowder in an ordinary gun, pistol, or other firearm shall not come within the section, otherwise nobody could discharge a gun or pistol for sporting or other purposes.

' 3. The third clause should be amended in a similar way, otherwise nobody would be able to have or carry a pistol or ammunition for his personal protection.

' 4. Sub-section [—] of clause 4 should also be modified in a similar direction; and, with regard to the carriage of blasting materials, railways should be compelled to receive and carry consignments of such materials from any licensed maker or magazine, as at present they refuse to carry them, and the only way to get them is to send a special messenger, who is obliged to convey them surreptitiously, and under such circumstances as to give rise to a reasonable suspicion.

' 5. The 5th clause should be altered by the insertion of the word "knowingly" before "procures."

' 6. Clause 6 is a very objectionable one, giving the right of private examination, which is being so much abused in Ireland at present. An attempt might be made to modify it in the following direction:

' (1) That the inquiry should take place in public if the witness desire it.

' (2) That he should be entitled to have a legal adviser present.

' (3) That no witness should be kept under exami-

nation for more than two hours at a stretch, or for more than six hours in any one day.

‘(4) That he should be permitted a suitable interval during his examination each day for the purpose of obtaining refreshment, but that no refreshment should be given him by the Crown.

‘(5) That where a witness is imprisoned for refusing to answer questions, the total period of imprisonment shall be limited to six months, and that he shall not again be imprisoned for refusing to answer questions in respect of such crime.

‘(6) That where a person is imprisoned for refusing to answer, he or his legal adviser shall be furnished with memorandum of the question, and [of] any statement made by the prisoner in explanation of his refusal to reply, or in partial reply to such question, and such prisoner shall be entitled to apply on affidavit to the Court of Queen’s Bench for his release, on the ground that his refusal to answer was justified by his inability to answer, or other reasonable cause, or that he had not refused to answer or had answered such questions to the best of his ability.

‘These appear to me to be some of the points worthy of attention in the Bill, and in reference to which exertions should be made to alter it.

‘Truly yours,

‘CHAS. S. PARNELL.

‘P.S.—I omitted to say that the duration of the Bill should be limited to three years, and Ireland should be excluded from its operation on the ground that the Crimes Act is sufficient.

‘C. S. P.’

On April 25 there was a great Irish convention

at Philadelphia. Parnell was invited, and urged to attend. His parliamentary followers were divided on the question whether he should go or not. He decided for himself. He did not go. He sent the following cablegram instead :

‘ My presence at the opening of the most representative convention of Irish-American opinion ever assembled being impossible, owing to the necessity of my remaining here to oppose the Criminal Code Bill—which re-enacts permanently the worst provisions of coercion, and which, if passed, will leave constitutional movements at the mercy of the Government—I would ask you to lay my views before the convention. I would respectfully advise that your platform be so framed as to enable us to continue to accept help from America, and at the same time to avoid offering a pretext to the British Government for entirely suppressing the national movement in Ireland. In this way only can unity of movement be preserved both in Ireland and America. I have perfect confidence that by prudence, moderation, and firmness the cause of Ireland will continue to advance ; and, though persecution rest heavily upon us at present, before many years have passed we shall have achieved those great objects for which through many centuries our race has struggled.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The London correspondent of the *Nation* wrote on April 21 : ‘ The question of the advisability of Mr. Parnell’s attending the forthcoming Irish convention at Chicago (*sic* Philadelphia) was, as the newspapers state, considered and resolved upon by a meeting of his colleagues a few days ago. The view of the majority was strongly opposed to his so doing. Weighty reasons were adduced by them in support of their view ; but reasons were also given on the other side. We must all hope that the best and wisest thing has been done ; but if a newspaper correspondent may express an opinion on so important and complicated a question, I would say that I had much rather the decision had gone the other way. The

The result of the convention was the formation of a National League of America<sup>1</sup> to co-operate with the National League of Ireland.

Partisans at one side have said that the National League of America was nothing more nor less than a Clan-na-Gael association; partisans on the other, that it was independent of the Clan-na-Gael altogether. The truth lies between these extremes. There were hundreds of members of the League who did not belong to the Clan; nevertheless the Clan, without absorbing, controlled the League.

It is idle to shirk the truth. The National League of America was run by the Revolutionists, who were only held in check, so far as they were held in check at all, by the fact that they had Parnell to count with. So much for the National League of America.<sup>2</sup>

It has been said in allusion to Parnell's counsels of moderation at this period that he was 'submerged' during the years 1883 and 1884. This statement is only true, if true at all, in a limited sense; for whenever his presence was necessary he came quickly enough to

proceedings of the convention have been looked forward to with great interest by everyone here. It is said that the plain issue to be determined there, is whether the use of physical force of all kinds—dynamite included—may not properly be employed by the Irish people in their struggle for the liberation of their country from British rule. To take the affirmative side of the discussion would, putting all other considerations aside, hardly be a safe thing for anyone who would contemplate returning to and living in any part of the so-called United Kingdom, least of all would it be safe for a member of the British Parliament. On the other hand, it would be no easy task to argue before an Irish-American audience that the use of force by Ireland, or by any other oppressed nation, for the recovery of its liberties would be immoral.

<sup>1</sup> In place of the American Land League.

<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of 1883 the Clan-na-Gael was divided into two branches, the one called 'The United Brotherhood'; the other (under the presidency of Mr. Alexander Sullivan) 'The Triangle'—a name derived from the fact that the government consisted of a committee of three.

the surface. Thus in the summer of 1883 a vacancy occurred in the representation of Monaghan. Parnell at once seized the opportunity to invade the North and to bombard the strongholds of Unionism. The tenant-farmers of Monaghan cared little for Home Rule. They cared much for the land. Parnell accordingly sent Mr. Healy—the hero of the Land Act of 1881—to storm the Ulster citadel. He himself appeared upon the scene, and plunged into the struggle with characteristic *élan*. The following incident of the campaign shows that Parnell's superstitious instincts did not desert him, even in the heat of the battle.

'The night before the polling,' says Mr. Healy, 'we found ourselves in the comfortable hotel at Castleblayney, exhausted by dusty driving and incessant speaking through a long summer day. We ordered dinner and were shown to our rooms. The rooms adjoined, and immediately after closing my door I heard Parnell's voice in the corridor ordering his apartment to be changed. Apparently there was a difficulty about this, as the hotel was crowded for the election next day. Knowing he was not in the least a stickler for luxury or hard to please about a room, I went out to ask what was the matter. There he was, standing in the passage opposite his bedroom door, with his bag in his hand, evidently chafing and very much put out. "Look at that," said he, pointing to the number on his door. It was No. 13. "What a room to give me! They are Tories, I suppose, and have done it on purpose." I laughed and said, "Take mine; let us exchange." "If you sleep in that room," said he, "you will lose the election." I looked into it, and found a good roomy chamber, much better than the one allotted to me, and I said so, pointing out that the "Tory"

hotel-keeper had probably given him the best room in the house. He was not to be pacified, however, so without arguing the matter I put him into my room, and installed myself in his. "I tell you, you will lose the election," he repeated, as I took refuge in No. 13.<sup>1</sup>

The election, however, was not lost. Mr. Healy was placed at the head of the poll by a handsome majority.<sup>2</sup>

The Monaghan victory roused the Ulster landlords. The Orangemen took the field against the 'invaders.' The invaders pressed forward everywhere, determined to improve their position in the northern province. There were demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, marching and counter-marching, Nationalist displays and Orange displays, until the province rang with the oratorical artillery of the opposing parties.

'Compel the rebel conspirators,' urged an Orange placard, 'to return to their haunts in the south and west.' 'We are not an aggressive party,' said an Orange orator, Mr. Murray Ker, D.L. 'Let there be no revolver practice. My advice to you about revolvers is, never use a revolver except you are firing at someone.'

'If the Government,' said Lord Claud Hamilton, 'fail to prevent Mr. Parnell & Co. from making inroads into Ulster . . . if they do not prevent those hordes of ruffians from invading us, we will take the law into our own hands.'

'Keep the cartridge in the rifle,' said the degenerate Home Ruler, Col. King Harman. 'Keep a firm grip

<sup>1</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, November 3, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Healy was replaced in the representation of Wexford by Mr. William Redmond.

on your sticks,' said Mr. Archdale. 'Only for the police and soldiers,' exclaimed Major Saunderson, 'those rebels would have been in the nearest river.' The Government proclaimed an Orange meeting at which Lord Rossmore was to preside. 'It is a great pity,' said his Lordship, referring to this action of the authorities, 'that the so-called Government of England stopped loyal men from assembling to uphold their institutions here, and had sent down a handful of soldiers whom we could eat up in a second or two if we thought fit. The Orangemen, if they liked, could be the Government themselves. I only wish they were allowed, and they would soon drive rebels like Parnell and his followers out of their sight.'

Despite Orange violence and Orange threats the Nationalists did their work in Ulster, and did it well, as the General Election of 1885 proved.<sup>1</sup>

Parnell himself 'lay low' after the Monaghan election, allowing his lieutenants to conduct the campaign in Ulster and elsewhere. He had for some time been in financial difficulties. The fact got abroad, and the people resolved to relieve him of his embarrassments. He told the story himself in his accustomed laconic style to the Special Commission: 'A mortgage on my estate was foreclosed, and I filed a petition for its sale. This fact, somehow or other, got into the newspapers, and the Irish people raised a collection for me to pay off the mortgage. The

<sup>1</sup> 'Unfortunately, however,' said Mr. Trevelyan, then Irish Secretary, 'the counter-demonstrations of the Orangemen were, to a great extent, demonstrations of armed men. At their last meeting at Dumore sackfuls of revolvers were left behind, close to the place of meeting. . . . The Orange meetings were bodies of armed men . . . So far as the Government knew, it was not the custom of the Nationalists to go armed to their meetings until the bad example was set by the Orangemen.'—*Hansard*.

amount of the collection considerably exceeded the amount necessary.

The Parnell tribute (as this 'collection' came to be called) was a remarkable expression of popular confidence and enthusiasm. Seizing the opportunity which Parnell's embarrassments gave them, priests and people combined to give him a substantial proof of their regard, affection, and gratitude. Inaugurated at the beginning of the year, the fund increased gradually at first, and afterwards by leaps and bounds, until before the end of the year it reached nearly 40,000<sup>1</sup>. This munificent gift in itself bore striking testimony to Parnell's popularity. But an incident occurred some time after the subscription lists had been opened which showed in a more remarkable way still his hold on the mind and heart of the nation.

The Pope had never looked with favour on the Land League agitation. Indeed, he regarded it as nothing more nor less than a revolt against the lawfully constituted authorities, which in truth it was. And now Catholic bishops and priests and people of Ireland were uniting to place the Protestant leader of the revolt on a pedestal of glory. There were not wanting, it is said, English agents at Rome who readily used the Parnellite tribute as a lever to move the Pope against the agitators. The Irish were losing the faith; even their religious guides had been led astray, and nothing but the interference of the Pontiff could avert the dangers which imperilled the very salvation of the people. So it was whispered and believed at the Vatican. Impressed by these representations, the Pope acted with vigour and promptitude. A letter, signed by Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect, and Monseigneur Dominico

<sup>1</sup> The amount of the mortgage was about 18,000<sup>l</sup>.



Jacobini, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation de propaganda Fide, was despatched to the Irish bishops condemning the 'tribute' and calling upon them to give it no countenance. Of course the bishops obeyed this mandate, and the priests henceforth ceased to take any public part in collecting subscriptions. But the people heeded not the papal letter. They saw nothing in it but the hand of England. Certain facts were subsequently revealed which seemed to show that the suspicions of the people were not without some foundation. These facts may now be related.

Towards the end of 1882 an Irish Catholic Whig member (Mr. George Errington) went to Rome—on 'his own affairs,' it was said. Before starting, however, he called at the Foreign Office, told Lord Granville of his intended visit, and said that he might have an opportunity of discussing Irish affairs with the Pope. Lord Granville there and then gave him a letter of recommendation, which he had authority to show to the papal Secretaries of State. In the beginning of 1883 we find this gentleman practically filling the post of English Envoy at the Vatican. The Government wished to use the Pope to put down Parnell, and to control Irish affairs generally in the English interest. The Pope was anxious to re-establish diplomatic relations with England. Here was a basis of negotiation. Lord Granville dared not, in the light of day, send a diplomatic mission to the Pope. English public opinion would not stand that. But he thought that a private channel of communication might be opened through Mr. Errington, and that thus Downing Street could be kept in touch with the Vatican. 'What was thought of Errington Rome?' I asked an official of the Papal Court when

the Errington mission had become a matter of history. 'Oh,' he answered, 'we looked upon him as an English envoy. I remember in those days whenever I called to see Cardinal — I was habitually told that I could not see him; Errington was constantly closeted with the Cardinal. When he walked about in the vicinity of the Vatican the Swiss Guards saluted him. He was looked upon as a man of authority. It is easy for the English Government to repudiate Mr. Errington now, but they gave him the means of holding himself out to us as their agent.' The English Envoy used his influence to discredit the Irish agitators—lay and clerical.

One story will suffice to show how the Vatican regarded the Irish movement about this time. 'Had you been in Italy,' said Cardinal — to an Irish ecclesiastic, 'in the time of Garibaldi you would have supported Garibaldi.' 'Yes, your Eminence,' said the Irishman, 'I would have supported Garibaldi if he had had at his back the bishops and priests and people of Italy.'

Despite all attempts at secrecy, the Errington mission became a public fact, and Ministers were forced to admit in the House of Commons that Mr. Errington had received a letter of recommendation from Lord Granville, and that his despatches from Rome were deposited, like the despatches of any other ambassador or envoy, in the archives of the Foreign Office. In Ireland the papal rescript was at once ascribed to Mr. Errington's handiwork.

England had secretly sought the services of the Pope, her ancient enemy, to strike at the Irish leader and the Irish movement. Could the force of England's meanness further go? 'If we want to hold Ireland

by force,' said an English member<sup>1</sup> in the House of Commons, 'let us do it ourselves—let us not call in the Pope, whom we are always attacking, to help us.' The Irish were not irritated with the Pope. Their anger was wholly directed against the English Liberal Ministry, which, while constantly denouncing them as the creatures of Rome, had invoked the thunder of the Vatican to overwhelm a political opponent. The practical question now was, how the Pope and England should be answered. There was only one way of answering them. By making the Parnell tribute a conspicuous success. All Ireland worked for this end. Subscriptions, which before the rescript came in hundreds, now came in thousands, until a few months after its appearance the grand total of 37,000*l.* was reached. The English Ministers might have chuckled when the rescript<sup>2</sup> was issued. They did not chuckle when the tribute was closed. Then they realised the folly of invoking the aid of the Pope to crush an Irish popular leader.

'May I ask,' I said to Mr. Gladstone, 'if Cardinal Manning ever gave you any help in your relations with Parnell?' He answered: 'Never. He had, I think, something to do with the Errington mission<sup>3</sup>—a very foolish affair. Spencer thought it might do some good, and so I tried it. It did no good. Why, it is absurd to suppose that the Pope exercises any influence in Irish politics.' In order to dispose of the Errington mission at once, I may here, though anticipating dates,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Joseph Cowen.

<sup>2</sup> The papal rescript was dated May 11, 1883. On that day the Parnell tribute amounted to 7,688*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* On June 19 it amounted to 15,102*l.* On December 11 it reached the grand total of 37,011*l.* 17*s.*

<sup>3</sup> I understand that Cardinal Manning was opposed to the Errington mission.

insert a letter from Mr. Errington to Lord Granville. It was written in May 1885. Cardinal McCabe had recently died. The question of his successor in the archiepiscopal see of Dublin was under consideration. Dr. Walsh, of Maynooth, was the popular favourite. Dr. Moran, of Sydney, was practically the English nominee. Mr. Errington's services were, of course, used to secure this appointment. But the following letter fell into the hands of Mr. William O'Brien, who published it in 'United Ireland' on August 1, 1885 :

'House of Commons :

'Monday, May 15 [1885].

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—The Dublin archbishopric being still undecided, I must continue to keep the Vatican in good humour about you, and keep up communication with them generally as much as possible.

'I am almost ashamed to trouble you again when you are so busy, but perhaps on Monday you would allow me to show you the letter I propose to write.

'The premature report about Dr. Moran will cause increased pressure to be put on the Pope, and create many fresh difficulties. The matter must therefore be most carefully watched, so that the strong pressure I can still command may be used at the right moment, and not too soon or unnecessarily (for too much pressure is quite as dangerous as too little). To effect this, constant communication with Rome is necessary.

'I am, dear Lord Granville,

'Faithfully yours,

'G. ERRINGTON.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Errington however, had his reward. He was made a baronet.

The publication of this letter blew the bottom out of the Errington mission, and secured the appointment of Dr. Walsh.

In December 1883 the Parnell tribute was closed. It was decided to give the Irish leader a cheque, and to invite him to a banquet at the Rotunda.

On December 11 the banquet took place. There was, it is needless to say, an enthusiastic gathering. Parnell made a speech on the general situation, but said nothing about the cheque.

'I remember,' says Lord Spencer, 'the incident of the Parnell tribute. I hear that when Parnell received the cheque he put it in his pocket and never thanked anybody. Then there was a public meeting. I remember he made a long speech, but never said a word about the cheque. That struck me as a very extraordinary thing and very characteristic. Here is this handsome sum of money collected for him. He does not make the least reference to it, and he gives offence to nobody. That little incident always made an impression on me, because it showed the immense power of the man.'

I have said that Parnell derived his political ascendancy in no small degree from the fact that he walked all the time on the verge of treason-felony. He kept that path still. At no period since the beginning of the agitation was English feeling more incensed against Irish-Americans than during the years 1883 and 1884. The policy of dynamite had been boldly proclaimed by the 'Irish World.' Attempts were made to destroy the offices of the Local Government Board and to blow up London Bridge. Victoria, Paddington, Charing Cross, Ludgate Hill railway stations were marked out for destruction. Scotland

Yard was attacked. Dynamite plots and rumours of dynamite plots filled the air. There was an epidemic of outrages.

A dynamite factory was discovered at Birmingham. Batches of dynamitards were seized, and the public investigations which followed proved the American origin of these plots to lay London in ruins. The public mind was disturbed, the Government was alarmed. Special guards of police and soldiers were placed in charge of public buildings, and the streets of London presented the appearance of a town under the sway of some despotic ruler who feared the vengeance of his people.<sup>1</sup> Those who believed in the beneficent influence of the Anglo-Saxon race were enraged and horrified at this state of affairs. Any man who was, even to the slightest extent, under English influence would at this moment have shrunk from contact with the Clan-na-Gael. But Parnell held on his course. English opinion was naught to him. His one thought was to keep Irishmen united. He was prepared to suffer much, to risk much, for this. He did not hesitate in 1883 to proclaim to the world his determination to keep up communication with the American Revolutionists by despatching a cablegram to the Philadelphia convention ; and in 1884 he sent Mr. William Redmond and Mr. Sexton to another convention in Boston. He was cautious and circumspect. He did not desire publicity. But when publicity was necessary he did not shrink from it, let all England denounce him as it might.

Yet his relations with the Clan-na-Gael were not

<sup>1</sup> These outrages took place in 1883 and 1884. On January 24, 1885, attempts were made to blow up the Tower, the House of Commons, and Westminster Hall.

cordial. In sympathy with the rebellious spirit of the brotherhood, he looked upon the dynamite policy as sheer insanity. It was, besides, unfair to him and his parliamentary colleagues. Men in Chicago might easily hatch plots for the destruction of London, but they had not to run the gauntlet of the English House of Commons. Some consideration ought to be shown to those who had to carry on the struggle on this side of the Atlantic. None was shown. He did not conceal his private repugnance to the methods of the American Extremists. He spoke of Ford and Finerty as 'd——d fools.'

The 'Irish World' denounced the parliamentary movement, and opposed the parliamentary party after the Kilmainham treaty. In fact, from about August 1882 until about the middle of 1884, or even later, the 'World' was hostile to Parnell. 'There are no organisers,' it wrote in October 1882, 'going about knitting the people together. There are no orators or teachers sent through the country to educate men. On the contrary, all agitation has been discontinued, and a quieting down policy is the order of the day. Davitt, Dillon, Egan, Brennan have been wishing and praying for vigorous action, all in vain.' In November 1882 the 'World' wrote: 'We have not as much faith in the wisdom and ability of Mr. Parnell as we once had.'

If the Clan could have fitted out a fleet of torpedo boats to blow up the British fleet Parnell would have offered no objection. That would have been war. But a conspiracy to damage the British empire by abortive dynamite explosions in the streets of London was the conception of lunatics.

He would sometimes smile grimly at the grotesque.

ness of these plots, occasionally hatched with utter indifference even to the lives of the Nationalist members themselves. Had the attempt to destroy the Charing Cross Railway Station been successful, a score of Irish members who were stopping at the Charing Cross Hotel would have been blown into eternity. It transpired at the trial of some of the dynamitards that a proposal had been made to throw a bomb into the House of Commons. 'I entered the House of Commons about this time,' said Mr. Harrington. 'I remember being in the Smoking-room one evening with Parnell and Lord Randolph Churchill. "Well, Parnell," said Lord Randolph Churchill, referring to the dynamite trials, "I suppose you would object to have a bomb thrown into the House of Commons. You would not like to be blown up, even by an Irishman." "I am not so sure of that," said Parnell, "if there were a call of the House."'

'Mr. Parnell,' asked the Attorney-General at the Parnell Commission, 'you know that Daly [a convicted dynamitard] at all events was tried for being a dynamitard?' 'Yes,' answered Parnell, 'he was tried and convicted of having bombs in his pocket which, it was suggested, were going to be thrown on the floor of the House of Commons, which would probably have had an equal effect all round.'

But what did Parnell think of the morality of dynamite? He did not think about it at all. He regarded the moral sermons preached by English statesmen and publicists as the merest cant, and looked upon the 'Times' denunciations of the 'Irish World' as a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Morality was the last thing the English thought of in their dealings with Ireland. Morality was the last



thing he thought of in his dealings with them. There are men who can readily argue themselves into the belief that whatever serves their purpose is moral. Such men could easily explain away the dynamite outrages to their own satisfaction. But Parnell's mind was too simple to indulge in the subtleties and refinements necessary for this achievement. He was content to call the dynamitards fools, and to laugh at the moral pretensions of the House of Commons. For the rest, he concentrated all his energies upon the main purpose of bringing the British statesmen to their bearings on the question of Ireland. He had no faith in an English party. He advised his fellow-countrymen to trust in none. Speaking at the St. Patrick's Day celebration in London in 1884, he said: 'I have always endeavoured to teach my countrymen, whether at home or abroad, the lesson of self-reliance. I do not depend upon any English political party. I should advise you not to depend upon any such party. I do not depend upon the good wishes of any section of the English. Some people desire to rely on the English democracy—they look for a great future movement among the English democracy; but I have never known any important section of any country which has assumed the government of another country to awaken to the real necessities of the position until compelled to do so. Therefore I say, do not rely upon any English party; do not rely even upon the great English democracy, however well disposed they may be towards your claims; but rely upon yourselves, upon the great power which you have in every industrial centre in England and Scotland, upon the devotion of the sea-divided Gael, whether it be under the southern cross or beyond the wide

Atlantic; but, above all, rely upon the devotion and determination of our people on the old sod at home.'

In the struggle which was now imminent we shall see him playing off one English party against the other, and out-manceuvring both.

## CHAPTER XVI

## WOING PARNELL

I HAVE given one instance—the Monaghan election—of how quickly Parnell, though ‘submerged’ during the years 1883 and 1884, could come to the surface when his presence was necessary. I shall give another. We have seen that in 1882 Davitt wished to make Land Nationalisation a plank in the National League platform, and that Parnell would not allow it. Davitt still adhered to his views, and, not unfairly, endeavoured in private and public to enforce them. Parnell—shrinking from public controversy with a colleague, yet fearing that perhaps even a small section of the people might accept the principle of Land Nationalisation and that a division would thus be caused in the Nationalist ranks—felt himself constrained to make a public declaration on the subject. Speaking at Drogheda on April 15, 1884, he said: ‘It is necessary for me to take advantage of this occasion to warn you against elements of future difficulty—elements of possible future difficulty, and possibilities of grave disunion in our ranks, which may be obviated by a timely declaration. I refer to the project termed the nationalisation of the land, and in dealing with this question I don’t wish to

intrude upon you anything of a personal character. I prefer, as I always have done in public life, to deal with principles, and not with men. I have shown you two planks of the platform of the Land League—the destruction of rack-rents and of landlord oppression and evictions, and the facilitation of occupying ownership by the tiller of the soil. Well, unmindful of this fact, we have been recently informed upon distinguished authority, at a meeting in Dublin, that we have been false to the spirit of the Land League, that we are unmindful of its principles, because we refused to desert that which has been our programme up to the present moment and follow this new craze. Ownership of land by anybody, we are told, is theft. Whether that anybody be landlord or tenant, it is equally a crime and a robbery, and because we refuse to agree with that sweeping assertion we are condemned as slack and as yielding basely to the present Coercion Act. The desire to acquire land is everywhere one of the strongest instincts of human nature, and never more developed than in a country such as Ireland, where land is limited and those who desire to acquire it are numerous. I submit further, that this desire to acquire landed property, and the further desire to be released from the crushing impositions of rack-rents, was the very basis and foundation of the National Land League, and that without it, although not solely owing to it, we never could have progressed or been successful. As reasonably might we have supposed that we could have persuaded the poor man that it was with him a crime to endeavour to hope for the ownership of the holding he tilled. No more absurd or preposterous proposition was ever made to a people than, after having declared on a thousand platforms by a million voices that the

tenant should be the owner of his holding—that after this declaration had been agreed to by a million of our own countrymen in England, America, and Australia—after having, with unexampled success, proceeded forward on these lines for five years, we should quietly turn round, retrace our steps to the starting-post, and commence anew a movement which should be wanting in every element and prospect of success. . . . I have neither advanced nor receded from the position which I took up in 1879. It was a position which I thought you would be able to carry, and which in all probability you will be able to carry. . . . I said in New York, in 1879, when I landed there, what I say to you to-night—that you must either pay for the land or fight for it. . . . Constitutional agitation and organisation can do a great deal to whittle down the price that the landlord asks for his land, but it must be paid unless you adopt the other alternative which I say nothing about. We are told of some great wave of English democracy which is coming over here to poor Ireland to assist the Irish democracy. The poor Irish democracy will have, I fear, to rely upon themselves in the future as they have had to do up to the present moment. The land question of Ireland must be settled by the Irish people at home.'

This speech disposed of the question of Land Nationalisation. Davitt still held his own views, but he despaired of gaining any adherents in Ireland, and soon afterwards went on a tour to Egypt.

Towards the end of 1884 there was much discussion in Nationalist circles about the 'inactivity' of Parnell. 'Do you think,' a Nationalist said to me in December, 'that Parnell is tired of the whole business and that he means to chuck it up?' I ventured to remind my

friend of the Monaghan election and of the Drogheda speech, and suggested that Parnell would probably always appear upon the scene when he thought his presence was necessary; that he would not be forced into activity by the abuse of the 'Irish World,' any more than he would be forced into inactivity by the abuse of the 'Times.' He would always take his own line at his own time, and disregard the critics. A fortnight after this conversation Parnell was again in evidence. An election was pending in the County Tipperary. His nominee was Mr. John O'Connor, of Cork. A local convention nominated a local candidate, Mr. O'Ryan. Here was a new danger. A fight between two Home Rule candidates would certainly give the enemy an opportunity to blaspheme. English publicists looked at the situation with joy, Irish Nationalists with alarm. What was to be done? How was this fresh peril to be averted? One day Parnell arrived suddenly in the town of Thurles. Next day the danger had passed. Mr. O'Ryan had retired. Mr. O'Connor was accepted with acclamation. On January 8, 1885, Parnell addressed a meeting in Thurles. He said: 'When I went to Meath I was told that I was not a Meath man, but I was not told so by Nationalists. I was told so by landlords. When I went to Cork, no one there said that I was not a Cork man. The question is not whether you belong to this county or to that, but whether you are a good Irishman. Mr. O'Ryan has proved himself a good Irishman by the handsome way in which he has retired from this contest; and I will answer for it that Mr. O'Connor will prove himself a good Irishman if he is returned for Tipperary.'

He was returned for Tipperary without opposition.

The General Election was now approaching, and Parnell girded up his loins for the struggle. The election was fought under new conditions. In December 1884 a new Reform Act, establishing household suffrage in Ireland, became law. The result, contrary to the expectations of Ministers, was to strengthen the position of Parnell. The Irish electorate was increased from about 200,000 to about 700,000 voters, and the new voters were almost all Home Rulers. Ministers were 'hoisted with their own petard.' They believed that the new Franchise Act would make Ireland Liberal. In truth it effaced the Liberals.

For two years Parnell had kept quiet, flashing only now and then like a meteor across the political firmament, and again disappearing. Now he burst forth once more in a blaze of activity, and filled the world with his name. 'When,' he said, speaking of his tactics between May 1882 and January 1883, 'when courage was required when it was necessary for the interests of the nation, I have shown it; and when moderation was necessary and temperate judgment for the interests of the nation, I had the courage to show it too.'

He now made a short journey through the country, speaking at Clonmel (where the freedom of the city was presented to him) and at Bansha on January 9, and at Arklow on January 11. On January 21 he sounded the tocsin of war at Cork, in a speech which cheered the heart of every Nationalist in the country. He said: 'We cannot ask for less than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament, with its important privileges and wide, far-reaching constitution. We cannot, under the British constitution, ask for more than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament. But no man has a right to fix the boundary of the march of a nation. No man has a right to

say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further"; and we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall.'

On January 23 he delivered a lecture before the Cork 'Young Ireland Society' on Ireland and her Parliament. Mr. Horgan has given me the following reminiscence of this lecture :

'Parnell always stopped at my house in Cork. He was very pleasant in a house; quiet, and ready to put up with anything. He stayed with me in January 1885. The Young Ireland Society asked him to deliver a lecture on Irish history. He consented. Afterwards he said to me, "I really do not know anything about Irish history. Have you got any books I can read?" I knew as little about Irish history as he did, but I fished out some books for him. The day of the lecture came. The hour fixed was 8 P.M. We dined a little earlier than usual. Dinner was over at a quarter to eight. "Now," said Parnell, rising from the table, "I must read up the history. Will you give me a pen and ink, and some note-paper?" I put him into a room by himself, with pen, ink, and paper, and the books. I came back about a quarter to nine. He looked up smiling and said: "I'm ready!" He had made notes in big handwriting on the paper; about three notes on each sheet. "I think I will be able to say something now," he said. We then drove off to the rooms of the society. The streets were crowded, the rooms were crowded. We were an hour and a quarter late. When Parnell showed himself he received a magnificent reception. When he ascended the platform they cheered him again and again. What a king he looked, standing on that platform that night;



so handsome, so quiet, so self-possessed, so dignified. People thought of looking at no one but him. He dwarfed all around him. There was a majesty about the man which fascinated and awed you. I felt horribly nervous for him. I knew how he had got up the lecture, and I feared he would break down. I felt so anxious that I really did not follow the lecture at all. But I heard the cheers, and they cheered from beginning to end.

‘Coming home he was as simple and as proud as a child of the whole performance. “I think,” he said, “I got through very well.” He did not seem to have the faintest notion that people looked up to him, not only as the greatest man in Ireland, but one of the most remarkable men in Europe. He spoke like a young man making his *début* at a debating society. I can see him now walking upstairs to bed with the candle in his hand, and stepping so quietly and lightly so as to disturb no one. He was like a young fellow who has come home late and was afraid to wake “the governor.” Yet, with all his self-depreciation, modesty, and gentleness, you always felt that you were in the presence of a master. You dare not presume on his familiarity when he chose to be familiar. Without any effort whatever upon his part you always felt the overpowering influence of his extraordinary personality.’

From Cork Parnell went on January 25 to Ennis. On the 26th he addressed a meeting at Milltown Malbay. In February he was once more in London attending to his parliamentary duties.

On March 17 he presided at the St. Patrick’s Day banquet, and again laid down the principle on which the struggle should be carried on. ‘England,’ he

said, 'will respect you in proportion as you respect yourselves. Englishmen will not give anything to Ireland out of justice or righteousness. They will concede your liberties when they must, and no sooner.'

In April the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Ireland. Some Nationalists thought that the occasion should be used to demonstrate against the Government. Parnell did not hold this view. He was of opinion that the royal visitors should be allowed to pass through the country like ordinary visitors; that there should be no demonstrations one way or the other. On April 11 he wrote to 'United Ireland':

*Letter to 'United Ireland'*

'You ask for my views regarding the visit of the Prince of Wales. In reply I desire to say that if the usages of the constitution existed in Ireland as they do in England there would, to my judgment, be no inconsistency in those who believe in the limited monarchy as the best form of government taking a suitable part in the reception of the Prince. But in view of the fact that the constitution has never been administered in Ireland according to its spirit and precedents, that the power of the Crown as wielded by Earl Spencer and other Viceroys is despotic and unlimited to the last degree, and that in the present instance the royal personage is to be used by the two English political parties in Ireland for the purpose of injuring and insulting the Irish Nationalist party, and of impeding if possible their work, I fail to see upon what ground it can be claimed from any lover of constitutional government under a limited monarchy that the Prince is entitled to a

reception from the independent and patriotic people of Ireland, or to any recognition, save from the garrison of officials, and landowners, and place-hunters who fatten upon the poverty and misfortunes of the country. Let me suggest a parallel. Would it be tolerated in England for a moment if the Government for their own party purposes, on the eve of a general election, were to use the Prince of Wales as an electioneering agent in any section of the country, and were to send him upon a royal progress in order to embarrass their political opponents? The breach of constitutional privilege becomes still graver when we consider that it is the march of a nation which is now sought to be impeded—the fruition of a long struggle and of many sacrifices which the adventitious aid of this royal visit is enlisted to injure. I have, however, every confidence that our people, having been suitably forewarned, will not allow their hospitable nature and cordial disposition to carry them into any attitude which might be taken as one of condonation for the past, or satisfaction with the present state of affairs.

‘CHARLES S. PARNELL.’

Parnell's advice to receive the royal visitors with courtesy and reserve was not taken. There were hostile demonstrations in the south. In some districts black flags were hung along the line of route and the inscription was shown: ‘We will have no Prince but Charlie.’ English people were relieved, says the ‘Annual Register,’ when the Prince returned.

On the eve of the General Election of 1885 Ireland was boiling with sedition. Lord Spencer, like Mr. Forster, was tarred with the coercion brush. Wherever

he went throughout the south and west he was received with manifestations of disloyalty. From the hour of his landing to the hour of his departure 'United Ireland,' expressing popular opinion, never ceased to denounce him in language of unmeasured vituperation.

His excursions through the streets of Dublin surrounded by a military escort suggested rather the presence of an arbitrary despot than the rule of a constitutional Viceroy. The people sought his overthrow and the overthrow of the Minister who sent him with a singleness of purpose and a tenacity of will which for the moment dwarfed almost every popular grievance and obscured every popular aspiration. 'Remember Coercion! Down with Gladstone!' was the war-cry of the day.

Parnell was unmoved by the passions which swayed the multitude. He surveyed the situation with his usual calmness, and with his usual clearness of vision. Mr. Gladstone's Government was doomed. That much was evident. He had the power to destroy it, and he would destroy it. But what then?

In opening the campaign of 1885 Parnell fixed his eyes on three men in public life—Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Gladstone. As we have seen, he had no faith in English parties. He believed that neither Whigs nor Tories would do anything for Ireland because of righteousness. Office was the goal of every English politician. It was for him to see that no English politician should reach it except through the open ranks of the Irish parliamentary party. The new Reform Act would enable him to command a following of eighty or ninety members. With this force, well disciplined, he would be master of the situation. It was said that he ought to address

public meetings in England. He laughed contemptuously at the suggestion. He would concentrate all his efforts to bring English statesmen to his feet. Then he would let them convert the English people. That was his plan of operation.

Parnell liked few men; above all, he liked few Englishmen. Yet he regarded Lord Randolph Churchill with no unfriendly feelings. He thought that the young Tory Democrat possessed generous instincts, entertained kindly feelings towards the Irish, and was full of originality, resource, and courage. A pleasant companion, frank, witty, joyous, with a dash of fun and mischief, there was no English member with whom Parnell would rather spend an hour in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons than this Radical who was born a Tory. But would Lord Randolph take up Home Rule? Well, Parnell was of opinion that he was as likely to take it up as any other Englishman, and (at the worst) for the same reason—to get into office; at his best, however, Parnell believed that Lord Randolph was more likely to be genuinely touched by the Irish case than any of his compatriots. He also had a shrewd suspicion that there was nothing which this rattling young Tory would relish more keenly than ‘dishing’ the Whigs—except, perhaps, ‘dishing’ the Tories. But if he were drawn towards Home Rule, would he bring the Tory party with him? Of this Parnell had grave doubts. Yet he was satisfied that with Lord Randolph’s help he could at least create a diversion on the Tory side which would fill the Liberals with alarm and force them forward in his direction.

Politically, Parnell held the member for Birmingham in high esteem. They had combined to throw over

Mr. Forster. Would they combine to carry Home Rule? No member of the Cabinet was more advanced on Irish questions than the Radical leader. He had prepared a scheme of self-government which gave the Irish everything but a Parliament. He had always considered, and even at times consulted, the Irish party on Irish subjects. He kept in touch with the Nationalists when his colleagues in the Cabinet shunned them as pariahs. He disbelieved in the policy of coercion. He was fully in sympathy with a policy of redress and reform. Assuredly, if there were any English politician with whom Parnell might be expected to cultivate cordial relations, it was with Mr. Chamberlain. Yet as the crisis approached he kept the member for Birmingham at arm's length.

Mr. Healy and Mr. Chamberlain saw a good deal of each other in those days. On one occasion Mr. Chamberlain asked Mr. Healy to dine with him in order to have a talk about Ireland. Mr. Healy asked Parnell's permission. Parnell said, 'No,' angrily, and showed very clearly that he did not desire the continuance of friendly relations between the two men. In fact, Parnell seems to have made up his mind that Mr. Chamberlain would go to the verge of Home Rule and stop there. He would make the running for Mr. Gladstone. He could be relied on to that extent, but no more.

Mr. Gladstone remained. Parnell had no love for Mr. Gladstone. But he regarded every person in public life in England as an intellectual pigmy compared to the Grand Old Man. 'Ah,' he once said to me in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons, 'you do not know what it is to fight Mr. Gladstone. I am no match for him.' I said: 'Don't you think you under-

estimate your powers?' He answered: 'No; I could not explain to you what a strain it is to have to fight him. I know it. I have fought him, and am ready to fight him again; but he knows more moves on the board than I do.' He then paused; an Irish member entered from the Terrace. Parnell, shaking the ashes from a cigar, looked at him, adding quickly, with an arch smile, 'But *he* thinks he is a match for Mr. Gladstone.'

Man for man, Parnell would rather have Mr. Gladstone on his side than anyone in England. Party for party, he preferred the Tories to the Liberals. 'The Tories,' he said, 'can carry a Home Rule Bill through the Lords. Can the Liberals?' Hoping to convert the Tories, he believed nevertheless that Mr. Gladstone would in the end outstrip all competitors in the race for the Irish vote. The greatest parliamentary tactician of the age, the chances were he would out-manceuvre every antagonist. He might even out-manceuvre Parnell himself. Still the course of the Irish leader was perfectly clear. He had to threaten Mr. Chamberlain with Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Gladstone with both, letting the whole world know meanwhile that his weight would ultimately be thrown into the scale which went down upon the side of Ireland. His first move was against the Government. He wished to make the Liberals feel the power of the Irish vote. That could be done by beating them with the Irish vote.

On May 15 Mr. Gladstone announced the determination of the Cabinet to renew the Crimes Act.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet had decided, according to the account given by the Prime Minister, 'with the Queen's permission,' to abandon the coercion clauses of the Act, but to invest the Viceroy by statute with power to enforce, wherever and whenever necessary, the 'Procedure

Bill was to be introduced on June 10. Parnell bided his time, watching his opportunity. On June 8 the second reading of the Budget Bill was moved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach moved an amendment condemning the increase of beer and spirit duties proposed by Ministers. The House divided on the question. The Irish vote was cast upon the side of the Tories, and the Government were defeated by a majority of 12. When the figures, 264—252, were handed in, a wild cheer of triumph and vengeance, mingled with cries of 'Remember coercion,' broke from the Irish benches. Parnell had shot his bolt and brought down his man. Mr. Gladstone resigned immediately, and before the end of the month the Tories were in office. Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Randolph Churchill Secretary of State for India, and the Earl of Carnarvon Viceroy of Ireland. The effect of this *coup de main* on Liberal opinion has been described by Mr. Morley: 'A second point that cannot escape attention in this crisis is the peremptory dissipation of favourite illusions as to the Irish vote "not counting." The notion that the two English parties should establish an agreement that if either of them should chance to be beaten by a majority due to Irish auxiliaries the victors should act as if they had lost the division has been cherished by some who are not exactly simpletons in politics. We now see what such a notion is worth. It has proved to be worth just as much as might have been expected by any on-looker who knows the players, the fierceness of the

clauses' which related to changes of *venue*, Special juries, Boycotting. Ministers proposed, in fact, to dispense with the name and maintain the reality of coercion.—Jeyes, *The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain*, p. 148.



game, and the irresistible glitter of the prizes. When it suits their own purpose the two English parties will unite to baffle or to crush the Irish, but neither of them will ever scruple to use the Irish in order to baffle or to crush their own rivals. This fancy must be banished to the same limbo as the similar dream that Ireland could be disfranchised and reduced to the rank of a Crown colony. Three years ago, when Ireland was violently disturbed and the Irish members were extremely troublesome, this fine project of governing Ireland like India was a favourite consolation even to some Liberals who might have been expected to know better. The absurdity of the design and the shallowness of those who were captivated by it were swiftly exposed. A few months after they had been consoling themselves with the idea of taking away the franchise from Ireland they all voted for a measure which extended the franchise to several hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Ireland who had not possessed it before, and who are not at all likely to employ their new power in the direction of Crown colonies, or martial law, or any of the other random panaceas of thoughtless, incontinent politicians. As for the new Government, sharp critics—and some of the sharpest are to be found on their own benches—do not shrink from declaring that they come into power as Mr. Parnell's lieutenants. His vote has installed, it can displace them; it has its price, and the price will be paid. In the whole transaction the Irish not only count, they almost count for everything.'

Parnell scored heavily by his first move. He put the Liberals out, and the Tories in; punished the one party, and made the other dependent on his will. It was check for Lord Salisbury, and checkmate for Mr.

Gladstone. That was the state of the game in July 1885.

Kept in office by Parnell, the Tories did not of course attempt to renew the Crimes Act. They were more Liberal than the Liberals themselves; and Lord Carnarvon, in a gracious speech, expressed his determination to rule by the ordinary law. Parnell asked for an inquiry into the trials of the Maamtrasna murderers. It was granted. Sir William Harcourt denounced the action of the Executive in reopening the subject as a reflection both upon the Government of Lord Spencer and upon the administration of justice in Ireland. Lord Randolph Churchill scoffed at Sir William's qualms, repudiated all responsibility for the Government of Lord Spencer, and condemned the Liberal policy of coercion. The Tory Press was shocked. 'We admit,' said the 'Standard,' 'the force of the temptation to conciliate Mr. Parnell. We do not at all dispute the probability that the simple expedient adopted will succeed. But that, in our opinion, is not enough to justify the tactics that have been employed.'

'It was not Lord Spencer alone whose good faith has been impeached,' said the 'Times,' 'but the Irish judiciary, the law officers of the Crown, the public prosecutor, the magistracy, and the police.'

The following extracts will give the reader some notion of the efforts which were made by the Tory leaders to 'conciliate' Parnell.

*Lord Randolph Churchill.* 'Undoubtedly we do intend to inaugurate a change of policy in Ireland. . . . The policy of the late Government so exasperated Irishmen—maddened and irritated that imaginative and warm-hearted race—that I firmly believe that had the late Government remained in office no amount of

bayonets or military would have prevented outbreaks in Ireland.'

*Lord Carnarvon.* 'I believe for my own part that special legislation of this (coercion) sort is inexpedient. It is inexpedient while it is in operation, and it is still more inexpedient when it has to be renewed at short intervals.'

*Lord Salisbury.* 'The effect of the Crimes Act has been very much exaggerated. While it was in existence there grew up a thousand branches of the National League, and it is from them that those difficulties proceeded with which we have now to contend. The provisions in the Crimes Act against boycotting were of very small effect. It grew up under that Act because it is a crime which legislation has very great difficulty in reaching. I have seen it stated that the Crimes Act diminished outrages; that boycotting acted through outrages; and that the Crimes Act diminished boycotting. . . . It is not true; the Act did not diminish outrages. In September without the Crimes Act there were fewer outrages than in August with that Act. . . . The truth about boycotting is that it depends upon the passing humour of the population. I do not believe that in any community it has endured. I doubt whether in any community law has been able to provide a satisfactory remedy; but I believe it contains its own Nemesis.'

Parnell set his heart on a new Land Bill to facilitate the creation of a tenant proprietary. Such a Bill was passed. Lord Ashbourne's Act took its place on the statute-book. By this measure the State was empowered to advance a part or the whole of the purchase money to tenants who had agreed with their landlords to purchase their holdings. Forty-nine years were allowed

for repayment of the purchase money, at the rate of 4 per cent., and 5,000,000*l.* were taken from the surplus fund of the Irish Disestablished Church and set aside for the purposes of the Act. But the most remarkable development of the Tory Irish 'alliance' has yet to be unfolded.

In the summer of 1885 Lord Carnarvon invited Parnell to meet him to discuss the affairs of Ireland. Mr. Justin McCarthy shall begin this story :

'Some time in the summer of 1885 Howard Vincent came to me in the House of Commons and said that Lord Carnarvon wished to have a talk with Parnell about Ireland. Vincent asked if an interview could be arranged. I said that Parnell was a difficult man to see, and that I doubted if it could be arranged.

'Vincent said that the interview could take place at his house, and that everything would be managed very quietly; he would keep all the servants out of the way, and open the door himself. I promised to see Parnell and to put the matter before him. I did see Parnell, and I told him all that Howard Vincent had said. Parnell replied: "I will see Lord Carnarvon at his own house if he wishes to see me. There must be no mystery." I told this to Vincent, and it was finally settled that I should see Lord Carnarvon first. I called on Lord Carnarvon at his own house. He opened the conversation, saying he wished to talk about Ireland and to hear Parnell's views. He asked me if there were any suggestions about the government of the country which I would like to make. I said: "The first suggestion, Lord Carnarvon, I would like to offer is that you should go about without a military escort and without detectives. Trust the people."

'He answered: "I have made up my mind on that

point already. I mean to trust the people." Next he said that he was in favour of Home Rule.'

I asked: 'Are you sure he said Home Rule?'

*Mr. McCarthy.* 'Yes, he did.'

'Did he give any sort of explanation as to what he meant by Home Rule?'

*Mr. McCarthy.* 'Yes, he said some such arrangement as existed in the English colonies. He did not conceal that he would have some difficulty with his colleagues in the Cabinet, but he made no secret that he was himself in favour of Home Rule. I said that Parnell was willing to see him in his own house. He replied that they could meet at his sister's house in Grosvenor Square. The house was not, I believe, at that time occupied. The carpets were up. That was the reason, I suppose, that Parnell said afterwards that the meeting took place in an empty house. I saw Parnell immediately, and told him what had taken place between Carnarvon and myself.

'A few days later Parnell and Carnarvon met at the house in Grosvenor Square. They were quite alone. Parnell never gave me an account of the interview. He often had interviews which he kept to himself. Subsequently—it might be some months later—Carnarvon wrote to a lady, a mutual friend, saying that he was going to Hatfield to see Lord Salisbury, and that if he should happen to see me, to say that he would like to have a talk with me. This lady invited me to dinner to meet Lord Carnarvon; the only persons present were the lady and her husband, and Lord Carnarvon and myself. After dinner the lady and her husband took some opportunity of retiring from the room, and Carnarvon and I were left alone. He at once called my attention to an interview which Parnell had just given

to an American newspaper. In this interview Parnell was reported to have said that he expected more from Mr. Gladstone than he did from the Tories. "If this newspaper report be true," said Lord Carnarvon, "there is no use in our going on." That was his expression, or something like it, as well as I can recollect. I unfortunately had not seen this report. I knew nothing about it. I could not give any explanation. I could not say anything.<sup>1</sup>

'Carnarvon added something to the effect that if Parnell looked to Mr. Gladstone to settle the question of Home Rule it was idle for him to discuss the subject further.

'That was substantially what happened at this interview. I had always a high opinion of Lord Carnarvon. I feel satisfied he was willing to give us Home Rule, but how far he could carry the Cabinet with him, of course, I do not know. It is possible that Carnarvon was honestly thinking of Home Rule, while the Cabinet were thinking of the General Election.'

Lord Carnarvon's account of the transaction may now be given :

'Towards the end of last July it was intimated to me that, if I were willing, Mr. Parnell would also be willing to meet me in conversation. . . . At that moment there was no one who could precisely say what the wishes and the desires of the Irish parliamentary party were. There had been singular reticence on their part, and it was impossible really to know what their views and opinions were.

'There was only one man who was in any way qualified to speak. He was the chosen leader of the

<sup>1</sup> This was an interview with a reporter of the *New York Herald* in October.

Irish parliamentary party, and his power was singularly and exceptionally large. He stood at the head of the parliamentary body, who have proved their strength by virtually controlling the business of the House of Commons. It was notorious that when the new Parliament should be elected his strength would be at least doubled. When I, therefore, received such an intimation I felt that, on my part at least, I had no option in the matter. It seemed to me to be my duty to make myself acquainted with what Mr. Parnell's views and opinions were. . . .

'I endeavoured to make myself explicit to Mr. Parnell. I explained that the three conditions upon which I could enter into conversation with him were :

'First of all, that I was acting for myself by myself, that all the responsibility was mine, and that the communications were from me alone—that is, from my lips alone.

'Secondly, that that conversation was with reference to information only, and that it must be understood that there was no agreement or understanding, however shadowy, between us.

'And, thirdly, that I was there as the Queen's servant, and that I would neither hear nor say one word that was inconsistent with the union of the two countries.

'To these conditions Mr. Parnell consented, and I had the advantage of hearing from him his general opinions and views on Irish matters. This really is the whole case. Mr. Parnell was quite frank and straightforward in all he said. I, on the other hand, had absolutely nothing to conceal, and everything I said I shall be perfectly contented to be judged by. Both of us left the room as free as when we entered it. It was the

first, the last, and the only time that I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Parnell.'<sup>1</sup>

Parnell's statement comes next :

'Lord Carnarvon originally proposed that I should meet him at the house of a gentleman (a member of Parliament<sup>2</sup>) who subsequently undertook a mission to Ireland, and obtained letters of introduction to several leading members of the Irish parliamentary party, with whom he discussed in detail the species of an Irish Parliament which would be acceptable to Ireland. I declined, however, to meet Lord Carnarvon at the house of a stranger, and suggested that if the interview were to take place at all it had best be at his own residence. I must take issue with the correctness of Lord Carnarvon's memory as to two of the three conditions which he alleges he stated to me, as the conditions upon which he could enter into any conversation with me—namely, that first of all he was acting of himself, by himself, and that the responsibility was his, and the communications were from him alone ; and secondly, that he was there as the Queen's servant, and that he would neither hear nor say one word that was inconsistent with the union of the two countries, and that I consented to these conditions. Now, Lord Carnarvon did not lay down any conditions whatever as a preliminary to his entering into conversation with me. It must be manifest that if he desired to do so he would have intimated them when requesting the interview. He certainly made no use whatever of the two terms of the two conditions which I have repeated. There is, however, some foundation for his statement concerning the remaining one, inasmuch as he undoubtedly re-

<sup>1</sup> House of Lords, June 10, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Howard Vincent.



marked at the commencement of our conversation that he hoped I would understand that we were not engaged in making any treaty or bargain whatever. Lord Carnarvon then proceeded to say that he had sought this interview for the purpose of ascertaining my views regarding, should he call it, a "Constitution for Ireland." But I soon found that he had brought me there in order that he might give his own views upon this matter as well as ascertaining mine. I readily opened my mind to him on the subject, and in reply to an inquiry as to a proposal which had been made to build up a central legislative body on the foundation of county boards, I told him that I thought that this would be working in a wrong direction, and would not be accepted as a settlement by Ireland; that the central legislative body should be a Parliament in name and in fact, that to it should be left to the consideration of whatever system of local government for the counties might be found necessary. Lord Carnarvon then assured me that that was his own view also; that he strongly appreciated the importance of giving due weight to the sentiments of the Irish in this matter. He then inquired whether in my judgment some plan of constituting a Parliament in Dublin short of Repeal of the Union might not be devised and prove acceptable to Ireland; and he made certain suggestions to this end, taking the colonial model as a basis, which struck me as being the result of much thought and knowledge of the subject. Then came the reference to protection. We were discussing the general outline of a plan for constituting a Legislature for Ireland on the colonial model, when I took occasion to remark that protection for certain Irish industries against English and foreign competition

would be absolutely necessary; upon which Lord Carnarvon said: "I entirely agree with you, but what a row there will be about it in England."

'At the conclusion of the conversation—which lasted more than an hour, and to which Lord Carnarvon was very much the larger contributor—I left him, believing that I was in complete accord with him regarding the main outlines of a settlement conferring a Legislature upon Ireland. In conversing with him I dealt with the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who was responsible for the government of the country. I could not suppose that he would fail to impress the views which he had disclosed to me upon the Cabinet, and I have reason to believe that he did so impress them, and that they were strongly shared by more than one important member of the body, and strongly opposed by none.'<sup>1</sup>

But the most interesting communication which I have received on this subject is from the pen of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy.

<sup>1</sup> Communicated to the Central News Agency, June 12, 1886.

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE CARNARVON CONTROVERSY

*By Sir Charles Gavan Duffy*

I ASSENT, my dear O'Brien, to your request that I should write the story of Lord Carnarvon's pourparler with Mr. Parnell and other Nationalists in 1885, chiefly because I think that Lord Carnarvon has never had fair play in that transaction either from friends or enemies. He was misrepresented not so much from malice as from sheer misconception, for he was a type of man with whom his critics were not familiar. To the cynical nothing seems simpler than the case: a leading member of a Government much in need of votes conferred with the leader of a numerous parliamentary party on a measure which they greatly desired, and with which he expressed substantial sympathy; but at a period when their votes happened to be no longer necessary the Government separated themselves peremptorily from the Minister who had conducted the parley, and of course he could effect nothing without them. To men, however, acquainted with Lord Carnarvon's strict and sensitive code of honour, to which he had more than once sacrificed office, the implied hypothesis was unacceptable, but they confessed it was unfortunate that his sympathy with Irish autonomy

should coincide so strictly with the necessities of his own party. The reader who follows this narrative to the end will acknowledge that the coincidence was purely accidental. Lord Carnarvon had been long of opinion that among the unsettled problems which disturb the peace and security of the Empire the discontent of Ireland was the most dangerous, and that a statesman could attempt no higher task than to abate or suppress it. He did not take up the Irish problem on a sudden party emergency, but, as we shall presently see, acting on a long held and well-weighed conviction that its solution by some just and reasonable method was vital to the public peace and security of the Empire. I undertake to tell the story because I know more of it than most men, perhaps than any man, and I desire and design to speak the naked truth, which just men have no need to fear.

When I returned from Australia to Europe in the spring of 1880 I made Mr. Parnell's acquaintance. He was then a tall, stately-looking young man of reserved manners, who spoke little, but the little was always to the purpose. He questioned me as to my political intentions, and I told him I came home to work for Ireland, but not in Parliament. I hoped to write certain books, and a career in the House of Commons was hard to reconcile with any serious literary enterprise. Outside of Parliament I should consider myself free to take whatever course seemed best to me on public questions without giving anyone a right to complain, for I would connect myself with no party. He renewed the subject once or twice, but this was always the substance of my reply.

During the five stormy years that followed I resided chiefly on the Continent, and watched his career from

a distance. On my annual visits to London I saw him occasionally at a dinner-table or under the gallery in the House of Commons, and our conversation on these occasions generally consisted of my criticism on his policy or that of his supporters in Ireland, which he bore with consummate good humour. I thought they might have done more to suppress outrages and abate endless turbulence, and I insisted that talking of obtaining the land for the people at 'prairie value' was misleading and must end in disastrous disappointment. The Irish movement was one in favour of as just a cause as ever man advocated, but it was not only often reckless in its violence, but, as I was persuaded, hide-bound by want of knowledge and experience. Mr. Parnell was entirely unfamiliar with the studies and experiments which had brought a new soul into Ireland nearly half a century before. He belonged to a family which had reared Thomas Parnell, the author of 'The Hermit,' but he was so little sympathetic with that ancestry that one of his friends told me he seriously asked him what was the use of poetry? His friend told him, I trust, that one of its most practical uses was to kindle patriotism, to feed it with Divine nourishment, and to re-kindle it after every defeat. The 'new movement,' as it was named, made conflicting impressions upon me. I could not fail to see that Mr. Parnell possessed one gift in perfection—the great and rare gift of dominating and controlling men. I had had much experience of Irish parties at home and abroad, and I had seen no one who possessed such mastery of a race among whom individuality is a passion. Grattan did not long control the Parliament which he made independent; O'Connell among men whose position depended altogether on his will was a joyous companion, among the gay loud-

speaking Celts, or at highest a peer among peers; but the proud, silent, isolated attitude of the new dictator was something altogether different. And it increased the marvel of his authority that he possessed none of the gifts by which his predecessors had won popularity. He had not a gleam of the eloquence of Grattan, or the passion and humour of O'Connell, or any trace of the generous forbearance by which Smith O'Brien aimed to efface himself in the interest of his cause, or of Butt's exact knowledge of Irish interests and annals, but he ruled with more unquestioned authority than any of them had done.

But his rule was rudely disturbed by a horrible and unforeseen calamity, the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish. A howl rose from the English Press against Parnell, to whom the crime was more disastrous than to any man in the community. He was so stricken by the calamity that he resolved to retire from Parliament and public life, and abandon a cause which villains and imbeciles had covered with so much shame. He proffered his resignation to Mr. Gladstone, and announced it to his party, but no one thought that a crime which he detested would justify such a retreat. I may mention, as a circumstance which partly explains the appeal to him I am about presently to describe, that while he was still resolved to retire he recommended his friends to find a substitute by the impossible expedient of inducing me to re-enter Parliament and take his place,<sup>1</sup> and in public and private he alluded gratefully to the creation of Independent Opposition in 1852; and more than once intimated that my relation with that event made him always ready to listen to my friendly counsels.

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of C. S. Parnell*, by T. M. Healy, M.P.

In the discussions over a new Crimes Bill, which the Government introduced to crush the Phoenix Park conspirators, the friendly relations between the Administration and the Irish party were altogether shattered, and the parliamentary contests between them were fierce and furious. During the same session the Gladstone Government carried the Irish Land Bill of 1881, which has proved a great boon to Ireland. They carried also a Reform Bill, which for the first time gave Ireland the same franchise as England. Strange to say, Mr. Parnell did not vote for the Land Bill (which he probably considered inadequate), and it was only at the last moment, on the eve of the second reading, that he consented to support the Reform Bill. On every division threatening the existence of the Government the Irish party at this time voted with the Opposition, and finally, in June 1885, the Gladstone Government was overthrown by their assistance.

After the fall of Mr. Gladstone's Government Lord Salisbury was called to power, and as he was only supported by an accidental majority a dissolution of Parliament became necessary.

I was in London at this time, and I was profoundly surprised by the intimation from one of Parnell's lieutenants that the Irish party had come to the resolution of supporting Tory candidates at the coming election. At a later period an address was published to the Irish electors in England which confirmed all I had heard. The address was a violent and implacable impeachment of the Liberal party, arraigning them as having coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the school, and freedom of speech in Parliament. The Gladstone party, it declared, had attained power

by promises which were all falsified. It promised peace, and made unjust wars; promised economy, and its Budget reached the highest point yet attained; it promised justice to aspiring nationalities, and it mercilessly crushed the national movement in Egypt under Arabi Pasha and murdered thousands of Arabs, 'rightly struggling to be free.' To Ireland, more than any other country, it bound itself by most solemn pledges, and these it flagrantly violated. It denounced coercion, and it practised a system of coercion more brutal than that of any previous Administration. Juries were packed in Ireland with unprecedented shamelessness, and innocent men were hung or sent to the living death of penal servitude; twelve hundred men were robbed of their liberty in Ireland without trial; and for a period every utterance of the popular Press or of the popular platform was as completely suppressed as if Ireland were Poland and the administration of England Russian autocracy. I was much alarmed at the insensate policy about to be pressed upon my countrymen. Parnell was difficult to find, but I called upon Dwyer Gray and told him that I desired very much to have a conference with Parnell on the policy of the hour. Gray promised to arrange a *tête-à-tête* dinner for the ensuing Saturday, which took place at his house accordingly, the party consisting of Parnell, Gray, and myself.

I asked Parnell what he was to get from the Tories for Ireland in return for the support about to be given to them. He said the new Government were not going to renew Forster's Coercion Bill; beyond that he did not know what they meditated. I replied that he ought to know; he was bound before obtaining the support of Irish voters for candidates who in



Ireland would be often Orangemen, and in England often bigots or blockheads. His support was enormously important to the Tory party, and to get nothing in exchange for such a boon was not policy or strategy, but childish folly. What could he get, and how could he get it? he demanded. You might get, I replied, the promise of a Select Committee or a Royal Commission to hear evidence and report on the best means of allaying Irish discontent; the best and only means being, as we knew, Home Rule. As to the method, I reminded him of what happened recently with respect to the late Reform Bills; the leaders of the two parties met in private, and came to a compromise which their supporters accepted without controversy. 'Yes,' he said, 'but an august personage was understood to have recommended that compromise, and he had no august personage to help him.' No, I rejoined, but he had something as decisive; he had the power of turning the Tory minority into a majority. If the new Government promised to consider Home Rule favourably there was probably not a seat in Ireland which they or we could not carry. Gray asked whom was Parnell to approach. The whips were worth nothing in such a case; they had no authority, and might be disavowed. I said I could put him into communication with a Cabinet Minister who was well disposed towards Ireland, even to the extent of desiring to give her self-government, and who was a man of integrity and honour, who might be relied upon to do whatever he promised. The man, I added, was the new Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, Lord Carnarvon. Parnell expressed much satisfaction, and we debated the method by which this opportunity might be made most fruitful. I said if Parnell abandoned the idea of vengeance on the

Liberals, which I considered insensate in a popular leader, and took the ground that he would help the new Government to the best of his ability at the elections and in Parliament provided they took up the Home Rule question, at least to the extent of promising an inquiry, I would go to Ireland and open negotiations with Lord Carnarvon which Parnell might confirm later. Gray asked if my recent article in the 'National Review,' appealing to the Conservative party to carry Home Rule, was written in concert with any Conservatives. Yes, I said, I had consulted some Conservatives in the House of Commons on the subject, and the article was sent to the 'National Review,' of whose editor I knew nothing, by Lord Carnarvon. Before separating I urged on Parnell and Gray the need of getting the Tories to give a Catholic University to Ireland. Parnell demanded if there were any great need of it. Yes, I said, vital need. The Scotch had excellent schools and colleges, and they beat the Irish everywhere in the battle of life. This was very significant in the Colonies, and Gray would tell him that in Ireland the business of his large office was managed by a Scotch Presbyterian, and that James Duffy's publishing establishment was managed by another Scotch Presbyterian; not certainly that they preferred Scotch Presbyterians, but that they were of opinion that they could not get so suitable men at home. Gray assented, and Parnell said that if it could be done it ought to be done. I agreed to go to Ireland immediately, and I said I would open the business by a public letter to Lord Carnarvon on the justice and policy of conceding Home Rule.

I must now state the grounds upon which I counted on the assistance of Lord Carnarvon. During

a visit to Europe from Australia in 1874 I made his acquaintance, he being at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies. I was his guest repeatedly at Highclere and in London, and had much conversation with him on Colonial and Imperial affairs, and had an opportunity of noting him in action and in council. I was much impressed by the essential justness and fairness of his opinions, especially on questions which long controversy had rendered morbid. He was a Tory without a *souçon* of the religious bigotry which I had so habitually seen associated with Toryism in Ireland and Australia, and as ready as any man I have ever encountered to hear his opinions frankly debated. He took up public questions, not to estimate the party results they might yield, but to determine what was just and necessary respecting them. He spoke of Australian Federation, Imperial Federation, and, to my great satisfaction, the claims of Ireland to self-government. He seemed to have arrived at the conclusion that the honour and interest of the Empire demanded some settlement of the Irish claims which would put an end to chronic disaffection. These were topics on which I had long pondered, and had naturally much to say, to which he listened with courtesy and attention. I probably proposed, at any rate I undertook, to write a paper on the Federation of the Empire, including the Federation of Ireland. I did not keep a copy of this paper, and after a quarter of a century might have forgotten its existence but that a note of Lord Carnarvon of that date acknowledging the receipt of it revives the subject in my memory, and shows conclusively that for a dozen years before his Irish Vice-Royalty he was deeply engaged on the Irish problem.

‘Gedling Rectory, Nottingham: September ’74.

‘DEAR SIR GAVAN DUFFY,—Your letter and memorandum have found me where I am staying for a few days. Let me thank you much for them. The subject of our conversation at Highclere had not in any way escaped me. I have indeed thought much of it, but I was very glad to have your opinion actually on paper, and in a form so clear and complete as that in which you have expressed it. I will give it every attention, and when later in the autumn we again meet I will tell you the result of my consideration.

‘I certainly will not fail to give you notice of my scheme for an undress reception, for I retain a lively recollection of the friendly interest that you have taken in it. It only depends on our getting access to the new buildings, and this I should hope may be early in November.

‘I hope that you will now feel the benefit of your baths (at Aix-les-Bains). As a rule the advantage of them comes out after your return home. At the time they mainly exhaust the patient.

‘Believe me, yours very sincerely,

‘CARNARVON.’

The undress reception referred to in the end of the note was a very practical project of having together once a fortnight, I think, the leading colonists then in Europe, who might frankly interchange opinions with the Minister and with each other.

When I returned finally to Europe, in 1880, I saw much of Lord Carnarvon. His mind was set on attempting certain large measures, and he perhaps thought that I might be of some service in removing difficulties. As I was an unequivocal Home Ruler, he

assumed, and had a right to assume, that I saw means of carrying Home Rule into operation without injustice to the great interests which it would affect. I urged him to make some sign of his sympathy with Irish claims, but he very naturally sought to have the question threshed out before committing himself in any public manner. In the spring of 1883 he suggested the main difficulties of the case, the prejudices which ought to be allayed, and the interests which ought to be rendered safe from possible spoliation :

‘ 43 Portman Square : April 28, 1883.

‘ DEAR SIR GAVAN DUFFY,—I have received and carefully read the paper which you have sent me. The subject is one which it would be far easier to talk over in friendly conversation than to discuss on paper, but, writing in confidence and as lawyers say “without prejudice,” I do not like to remain entirely silent in answer to your letter.

‘ Viewing the matter, then, as one of argument I should say that the weak point in the reasoning is this—that it is difficult to see the guarantee which you and every fair man would desire to give to the English, and especially the English landowning population, for the security of their property when once the legislation and government of the country are transferred to the Irish people. After the events of the last three years some real security cannot be considered unreasonable, and they should be free either to part with their property at a fair value, or their possession of it should be guaranteed to them by some process, which I am afraid from the nature of the circumstances is impossible. I do not see how a money compensation could be found without undue recourse to the English

taxpayer, and a constitution furnished with safeguards to give a voice to the minority and security to property would or might become an object of attack to agitators, and unless supported by English force—which is a supposition fatal to the whole idea on which we are arguing—it would be swept away. I do not say that this would necessarily happen, but the recent agitation in Ireland makes it at least essential to guard against it; for, bad as things are, such a contingency, which would mean anarchy of the worst kind, would only make it worse.

‘Some option to sell at a fair price or to remain and take their chance under a fair constitution as carefully guarded and guaranteed as possible seems alone, in point of argument, to meet the conditions of the case; but here, as I have said, you would be confronted by the magnitude of the amount required and the practical impossibility of providing it.

‘I conclude that you are still at Nice, and I hope the better for it in health. Believe me,

‘Yours very sincerely,

‘CARNARVON.’

I feared that the whole plan might be wrecked by the need of purchasing out the landlords at an enormous cost, and I urged upon him not to insist on that condition. It seemed to me that the essential basis of an arrangement acceptable to the Tory party must be that the Irish proprietors shall stay at home and do their duty, as the gentry of other countries do. Why should they not do so? It was the unspoken condition on which their class exists, and its privileges can be justified only if they perform the public duties for which they are specially fit.

There was one class of proprietors, and one only, in respect to whom I thought a provision ought to be made for buying out their interests—the absentees who have estates in England. They could not be expected to reside in Ireland, and they have always been a disturbing element there. Ireland has been governed at their discretion, and with a care mainly to their individual interests, at any time that can be specified from the sixteenth century downwards.

But the securities which he claimed against the rash or illegitimate disturbance of the fundamental conditions of the new constitution ought, I admitted—and could, I insisted—be provided. It is not necessary that I should go into details here, as I specified at a later period in a ‘Review’ article the securities I relied on.

I was fortunate enough to obtain the admission of many noted Unionists that it was sufficient.<sup>1</sup>

In the middle of October 1884 I made a visit of some days to Highclere with a view to the free colloquial discussion which Lord Carnarvon desired. The time had manifestly come to consider the Irish question, not as an academic thesis, but as a practical problem which might soon demand immediate handling. I was of opinion that there were many other Conservatives, especially in the House of Commons, who thought that this problem ought to be speedily dealt with, and I undertook to write an article showing that there was nothing in the principles or practice of the party which prohibited them from undertaking the task. I wrote an article entitled ‘An Appeal to the

<sup>1</sup> *A Fair Constitution for Ireland*, by Sir C. Gavan Duffy, K.C.M.G. Republished as a pamphlet from the *Contemporary Review* by Sampson Low, Marston & Co., London.

Conservative Party,' which Lord Carnarvon sent to the 'National Review,'<sup>1</sup> their monthly organ. It excited wide controversy, and was unexpectedly well received by the Conservative Press. A mere glance at the Appeal will be sufficient for my present purpose, but such a glance is necessary to explain Lord Carnarvon's connection with the Irish problem, for I stated only opinions which I was persuaded he also held. I reminded Conservatives that there was nothing in their hereditary policy which forbade them to take the claims of Ireland into favourable consideration, and nothing in the nature of these claims which justified English gentlemen in rejecting them without further inquiry.

The Tories got their historic name (*Toree* = Irish *Rapparee*) from their sympathy with oppressed Catholics whom the Whigs were plundering or loading with penal laws. On the fundamental principles of loyalty and obedience to authority, Irish Catholics and English Tories were then in accord; but the Irish wing of the Tory party were Puritans for the most part (were, in fact, bitter Whigs of the original type), and they gave what in modern times would be called an Orange tinge to the policy of the entire connection. The original amity, however, justified the presumption that there is no essential and immovable barrier between Conservatives and the Irish people. They were friends at the beginning—why should they not still be friends?

It was on behalf of Tories of the last century that the first offer to repeal the penal laws was made. William Pitt, prompted by Edmund Burke, projected the complete emancipation of Catholics. Burke said, in so many words: 'If you do not emancipate the Catholics, they will naturally and inevitably join the Republican conspiracy hatched in Belfast.' But a cabal in Dublin, in the interest of Protestant ascendancy, thwarted the design of the statesmen, and from that day forth the Whigs, who took up the measure which their opponents abandoned, have been able to count on Irish Catholics as allies against the Tories.

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<sup>1</sup> February 1835.



When Emancipation came at last, more than a generation later, it was the Tories who carried it, and carried it against another revolt of their allies in Ireland. The gates of the Constitution were thrown open by Wellington and Peel, but to appease the discontented wing in Ireland not one Catholic was invited to enter and be seated. Soft words do not butter potatoes any more than parsnips, and Irishmen were not content with this barren victory. Thus another opportunity for making friends of a whole nation was wantonly thrown away.

The Irish land question had become the special property of the Liberal party, because they were first to legislate upon it. But the teaching which must precede legislation began with their adversaries. Michael Sadler, a Conservative gentleman, was the earliest Englishman to demand justice for Irish farmers. He preached their rights to Parliament and the English people with passionate conviction and genuine sympathy, but he preached to deaf ears. A generation later Sir Joseph Napier, Irish Attorney-General of the Derby Government of 1852, made a serious and generous attempt to settle the question. His measures passed the House of Commons, but the Irish peers, taking fright at the concessions which Mr. Disraeli made to the Tenant League party, induced Lord Derby to repudiate what had been done or promised; and a week later his Government came to an end by the desertion of the Tenant League members, who considered themselves betrayed. Again the Tory party were first to take in hand the question of middle-class education in Ireland; and if the Queen's Colleges founded by Sir Robert Peel failed, it was once more the Tories, led by Mr. Disraeli and Lord Cairns, who proposed an effectual reform of the system. Thus free altars, secure homesteads, and that effectual education which is an essential equipment in the battle of modern life, were all in turn proposed, and two of the three carried into law, by the party whom I now addressed.

With such a record, why should it be impossible for English Conservatives to settle the Irish question? Was it that the demand made by Irishmen for the control of their own affairs is repugnant to the principles and policy of the Tory party? Very far from it. It was the Tory Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel which laid the basis of colonial freedom by establishing parliamentary government in Canada. The men who had been proclaimed rebels because they insisted on the government of Canada by Canadians were

called to power as responsible Ministers of the Crown; with what results we know. Canada has become more and more an integral part of the Empire. It was the first Government of Lord Derby, a dozen years later, which established similar institutions in Australia. These prosperous and aspiring States are now ruled as England is ruled, and as Ireland desires to be ruled. The Imperial Government cannot control their local institutions any more than it can control the rising or setting of the morning star. And among the divers communities who recognise the supremacy of the Imperial Crown, who are more faithful to its interests than the colonists of Canada and Australia? Had the claims of Canada been treated as the claims of Ireland have been treated hitherto, there would have been a different result to exhibit.

On the eve of an election which may and must fix their position for a long future, it surely behoves Conservatives still more than Whigs to consider what it is fitting they should do in the premises.

To indicate that Ireland need not depend exclusively on the Tory party I quoted some language of Mr. Gladstone's which seemed to me a guarantee that sooner or later he would declare for Home Rule and take in hand the greatest question which remained for the treatment of an Imperial statesman. 'I honour Mr. Gladstone,' I said, 'for his services to Ireland, and I would rejoice to see his career crowned by the greatest achievement which remains for a British statesman to perform. But if another be ready to do it sooner and better, the wreath and the palm, the applause and the benedictions, are for the victor. We hail as a Hercules not him who has planned, but him who has accomplished one of the twelve labours.'

To illustrate the acceptance of the overture by the Press would occupy inordinate space; an extract from the Irish correspondent of the 'Times' will sufficiently indicate its general tendency:

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's article in the 'National Review,' recommending the Conservative party to come to an understanding with the Home Rulers for a settlement of the Irish question upon fair and equitable terms, has excited much interest among various classes of politicians here, and is very freely discussed. The writer's early connection with the Young Ireland movement as one of its most prominent and influential leaders, his long experience afterwards as a member of a colonial legislature which enjoys self-government, and as a statesman invested with the responsibilities of office as Prime Minister, and the moderate and conciliatory tone in which he writes, are elements of consideration which give a weight and significance to his proposal such as no essay of a mere theorist or speculative politician could possess. Loyalists are ready to enter into any combination which offers a chance of expressing, by their action, the bitter disappointment and resentment which they feel. Others, taking a calm and practical view of the altered circumstances, seem to think that it is a matter of imperative necessity to make the best terms they can with their opponents, and no longer maintain a hopeless struggle against a power which has been so strengthened by Ministerial encouragement and Imperial legislation as to become in a short time overwhelming. Sir Charles Duffy is too keen a politician and too sagacious an observer of public events not to see the favourable moment which is now presented for interposing as a mediator between parties who have hitherto been contending and are now resting upon their arms, and endeavouring to bring about an *entente cordiale* which may help to realise the object which he has always had at heart.

It may well be that the tone of the Press on this occasion encouraged Lord Carnarvon to believe the opportunity for settling the Irish question was at length at hand. As a general election was approaching, I urged upon him to induce his colleagues, the leaders of the Opposition, to indicate the intention of considering the Irish problem with a view to a settlement. The objections he made to immediate action were just and reasonable. He was determined to act, but not to act prematurely or without the co-operation of his ordinary allies. This was his reply :

Pixton Park, Dulverton : March 3, '85.

'DEAR SIR GAVAN DUFFY,—You will have seen by the papers how severe the political crisis has been, and you will have known from your own political experience how impossible it was to do anything beyond the necessities of the hour. The pressure is somewhat relieved; but I find very many difficulties on all sides—and some of them aggravated by the recent Fenian explosions and by the reports which are constantly appearing in the papers of dynamite conferences and further intended outrage. But I am mindful of our correspondence and conversation, and am very anxious, so far as I have the power, to get the whole question considered by those who can best deal with it, and without whom it would be vain to look for a satisfactory result. All this means more delay than I personally desire; but you know what public life is, and how impossible it is to hurry matters even when one is conscious oneself of the value of time. This above all seems clear to me, that premature action would do far more mischief than present delay. There are so many different interests, individuals, party considerations, that it is extremely difficult to act, and the present extraordinarily disturbed condition of politics abroad makes it almost impossible to secure the necessary attention for any subject, however important. Egypt, France, Germany, and India threaten, each of them, from day to day to raise issues which for the moment obscure everything else, however important. I never remember in my public life a time of such pressure and real anxiety. I write to you quite freely and frankly, because I know that you prefer this, and because I wish you to understand how very great are the difficulties which exist; at the same time, I do not

think the time has been wasted since my return to England. My tendency, as I think I said to you, is in all these matters to be cautious, and to avoid any premature step which must prejudice future action; and I specially dislike to seem to promise more than I can fulfil. In this case, as you know, the action of an individual is worth little; it must be the concurrence of many to bring about any satisfactory result, and this is not easy or very quickly to be obtained.

‘I am here only for a few days, and London is on the whole my safest address.

‘I have had both your letters, including your last of February 27, which, however, only reached me here this morning.

‘Lady Carnarvon desires me to thank you very much for the book on the vine cultivation, which she will doubtless receive in a day or two, and to which she is looking forward. I wish we were in a climate suitable to the growth of grapes! It is now blowing and pouring in a truly English fashion. Believe me,

‘Yours very truly,

‘CARNARVON.’

I doubtless urged various reasons for prompter action than he contemplated—of which, however, I have kept no record—for this was his rejoinder:

‘DEAR SIR GAVAN DUFFY,—I have just returned here from London, and I take the first opportunity of replying to your last letter.

‘Knowing as I do your anxious desire to find a solution for that great question on which your heart is naturally set, I am afraid you will not think my answer a very satisfactory one—and yet it is the only one which I can honestly give.

‘My personal sympathies are, as you know, largely with you. I believe I might say the same of many of my political friends, though, as I have always said, I can only speak for myself; but I have come unwillingly to the conclusion that at this moment, in the very critical state of foreign affairs, with a general election close upon us, with a condition of parties which enormously enhances the great difficulties of the question itself, it is not practicable—or indeed wise—to attempt any forward step. And however strong your own wish is towards a different conclusion, I think you will agree that this view is not an unreasonable one.

‘My belief is that till the General Election is over and both parties know their strength any attempt to settle this great controversy will not only be hopeless, but will distinctly prejudice the result; and if this is so, it is clearly one of those cases in which the best chance of a settlement lies in patience and some—and not a very long—delay.

‘I hope that you will believe that I say this from no desire to spare myself labour or anxiety. I appreciate too much the transcendent importance of the subject. But I have come slowly to this conclusion, and only after taking every means in my power to satisfy myself of the correctness of it. If you do not agree with me, I should yet like to know that you do not wholly disagree. Believe me,

‘Yours very truly,

‘CARNARVON.

‘Pixton Park, Dulverton : March 18, 1885.’

I have kept copies of none of my letters to Lord Carnarvon, but I find this rough draft of my reply to the last note, which contains at least the substance of what I said to him :

‘ March 24, 1885.

‘ DEAR LORD CARNARVON,—As you invite me to express an opinion on the determination you have arrived at, I will do so with the frankness and sincerity you would expect. You are so much better acquainted than I can possibly be with the difficulties to be encountered among your friends in raising the Irish question at present that it would be idle to debate that point. I never doubted there were serious difficulties and rooted prejudices to overcome, but what has any statesman accomplished worth remembering of which as much might not be said? Statesmen ignore the prejudices of their supporters because they are wiser and stronger than they. I pictured to myself that a statesman who possesses every blessing that fortune can bestow on a man would find in its difficulty one of the main charms of an enterprise. What is easily done, what any one can do, is scarce worth doing by the exceptional man. His purpose ought to “stream like a thundercloud *against* the wind.”

‘As respects the condition of parties and the approach of a general election, they seem to me to favour action rather than to forbid it.

‘Is not something due to the Irish party? If they had not voted with the Opposition there would be no political crisis in Parliament, but a triumphant and irresistible Government. And again, remember, had the Conservatives taken up the question in the spirit you were disposed to do, there would probably not be one Whig elected for Ireland in 1886. In many English constituencies the result would have been felt, for Irish voters would naturally have supported candidates of the party most friendly to Irish interests.

‘Of course I see, on the other hand, that English

counties, if the question were as suddenly presented to them, might be alarmed and offended; that you don't know the views of the new electors; and that there are party troubles enough already without increasing them. These are solid and prudent reasons in ordinary times; but we live in a period of revolution, when the party of resistance must stake everything on a general election. If, without the help of new friends, they are likely to be in a minority in the new Parliament, then the urgent problem is to find new friends.

‘I may mention—though of course it counts for nothing—that I had taken certain measures in relation to the intended movement. The Irish Catholic bishops are going to Rome after Easter, and I proposed to see certain of them at Nice on their way back, if I were by that time authorised to make a specific statement to them. I had also replied to letters from some of the Irish members that I would go to London in June, with a view to consult with them, expecting to be able to speak to them on the same subject. I can now say nothing to either.’

Four months later the Gladstone Government fell and the Tories were called to office. To my great satisfaction, Lord Carnarvon undertook the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Before leaving London, to secure himself from the ravenous herd of place-beggars who assail a new Minister, he took up his quarters for a week or two in a friend's house where no one could reach him without a passport. I saw him several times there, and was much pleased with his scheme of Irish policy. I promised to go to Ireland, and obtained his consent that I should address a letter to him in the



newspapers urging him to adopt Home Rule, without, however, intimating in any manner that I had reason to hope for a favourable answer.

When I arrived in Dublin I had immediately a letter from Lord Carnarvon, inviting me and my wife, who had accompanied me to Ireland, to an official dinner at the Castle on an early day, and an immediate conversation at the Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park, where he was then residing. I excused myself from going to the Castle for any purpose; I had promised long ago never to enter its portals till it was occupied by a National Government or a Government in sympathy with the aims of the people, and it would seriously impair my usefulness in conferring with the National party if I accepted Castle hospitalities. But I went immediately to the Viceregal Lodge in the park, and I had a prolonged conversation with Lord Carnarvon on the business which brought me to Ireland.

Lord Carnarvon was not even now prepared to pledge himself to Home Rule, but he was prepared to inquire what specific measure of self-government would satisfy Nationalists, and whether the Protestant and propertied minority could be reconciled to such a claim. He hoped to collect a body of evidence which would enable his colleagues to come to a decision on the question, and he certainly desired that the decision might be a favourable one. He repeatedly said: 'I cannot answer for my colleagues; I can answer for no one but myself. But I will submit to them whatever information I can collect, and report to you frankly what they determine.' I had urged more than once or twice that if the Government would not be prepared to go to the country with a proposal for Home Rule, which I scarcely hoped, they might authorise him to promise

that, if they came back from the General Election with a majority, they would appoint a select committee empowered to hear evidence on the question, and whose report might form the basis of future legislation. He thought there would be great difficulty in getting them to consent to a measure which involved such manifest consequences, and I suggested that the proposal might be for a committee to inquire into the federation of the Empire, of which the relations with Ireland would form a necessary part. He still saw difficulties, as no doubt there were. I told him frankly I had advised Mr. Parnell not to take the serious responsibility of recommending Irish electors to support Tory candidates unless they knew what Ireland was to have in return, and as the election was near at hand this was a question which must be settled without delay for the mutual convenience of the parties concerned.

The Under-Secretary at this time was Sir Robert Hamilton, a Scotchman of the just and sympathetic nature of Thomas Drummond. He was impatient of the total want of local government in Ireland, and the absence of the popular element from whatever boards or committees administered public affairs. He was of much service to Lord Carnarvon in gathering his materials and formulating his opinions, and when I met him I found a man whom I could esteem and respect. I speedily published a letter to Lord Carnarvon, entitled 'The Price of Peace in Ireland.' It consisted in a great degree of arguments which I had pressed on him personally from the time we had first debated the question down to the date of writing. As the letter excited much controversy, and was well received by the organs of the Conservative party in Ireland, I must fly through its leading features. I

welcomed Lord Carnarvon to Ireland, because I was persuaded his object in coming there was to perform work which would render his Irish Viceroyalty memorable. Its routine duties could have few attractions for a statesman who had handled important interests and guided large issues. Out of a long list of soldiers and nobles who had held that office the majority were quite forgotten, some were remembered only because they had left an evil reputation, but a chosen few would live for ever in the grateful memory of the Irish people. Lord Fitzwilliam shines in our annals like the morning star of dawning liberty. Commissioned by Pitt to concede complete emancipation to the Catholics in the last century, while O'Connell was still an unknown law student, he was baffled and thwarted by the bigotry which has been the blackest curse of the island; but though he failed, he is fondly remembered for what he devised and attempted. Lord Wellesley and Lord Anglesea bade us hope and strive when our counsels were most crossed and troubled. But above all, Lord Mulgrave, the first representative of the Crown in Ireland since the surrender of Limerick who dared to be greatly just. His son, the present Marquis of Normanby, served at the centre and at the extremities of the Empire, and wherever he went he assured me he found Irishmen who held his father's name in reverence and affection. But there was a wider and more permanent renown to be won than any of these Viceroy's achieved. It remained by one happy stroke to give peace to Ireland, and to make the connection of these islands secure and permanent.

There was only one method—an easy and obvious one. It succeeded in other countries in graver difficulties. There never was any other method, there

never would be any other. All others were doomed to certain disaster and failure. It was needless to name it; it was in every man's mind and on every man's tongue. The statesman who accomplished this task would leave a name which would live as long as history endures. No one knew better than an ex-Secretary of State for the Colonies what pregnant examples the colonial empire furnishes of the supreme policy and wisdom of doing justice to the oppressed. Half a century ago the great colonies were more disturbed and discontented than Ireland in 1880.

Lower Canada was organising insurrection under Catholic gentlemen of French descent, and Upper Canada was in arms under a Scotch Presbyterian. Australia was then only a great pastoral settlement, but bitter discontent and angry menaces were heard in all its centres of population, provoked by the shameful practice of discharging the criminals of England like a deluge of filth on that young country.

But Sir Robert Peel set the example of granting to the Colonies the control of their own affairs, and now Melbourne or Montreal was more exuberantly loyal to the Empire than London or Edinburgh. 'The New South Wales expedition to the Soudan was received with a roar of exultation throughout England; but that remarkable transaction, however warmly it was applauded, was imperfectly understood. The true moral it teaches is this—that it is wise and safe to be just. The acting Prime Minister of the colony who despatched that expedition was an Australian Catholic of Irish descent. If his native country were governed as Ireland has been governed, he had the stuff in him to be a leader of revolt. But it is permitted to govern itself, and we see the result. In Victoria the risk of war with Russia called out a demonstration as energetic. The Irish population undertook to raise a regiment of a thousand men for the defence of the territory where they found freedom and prosperity. Their spokesman was a young Irish Catholic, who had been a Minister of State at Melbourne at an age when his father was a prisoner of State in Dublin for the crime of insisting that Ireland should possess the complete autonomy which his children now enjoy in the new country.' These were some of

the natural consequences of fair play in the Colonies. Was there any reason to doubt that a like cause in Ireland would produce like effects? Nothing that the blackest pessimist predicted on the danger of entrusting Ireland with the management of her own affairs was more offensive or alarmist than the vaticinations of colonial officials half a century ago on the perils of entrusting colonists with political power.

Human nature has the same spiritual warp and woof in the Old World as in the New, and what has made Irish Catholics contented and loyal on the banks of the Paramatta and the Yarra Yarra would make them contented and loyal on the banks of the Liffey or the Shannon.

I felt almost ashamed to add that what I meditated was a settlement of the Irish question, accepted, as well as offered, in good faith; a plan capable of being worked for the common good of Irishmen, not for any special creed or class, but for all alike, and which would be defended against all enemies from within or from without in the same spirit in which it was accepted. This, and nothing short of this, had been the design of my whole public life; and I was as faithful to it now as when I shared the counsels of O'Connell or O'Brien.

In conclusion, I said I was not in the least afraid that the religious freedom of the minority would be endangered, but I would rejoice to see a risk which was improbable frankly rendered impossible.

No one, as far as I knew, desired to disturb the Act of Settlement, but the Act of Settlement ought to be put entirely beyond question. Your Excellency knows that in Colonial and American constitutions dangers of the same general character had to be guarded against, and have been guarded against successfully. The French-Canadian Catholics, who are now a handful in the midst of a nation, would not enter into the Dominion without guarantees for their religious liberty and their hereditary possessions; and you know these have been effectually secured and are safe beyond all risk.

For myself, as one Catholic Celt, I would say that the men I

most honour in our history, and the friends I have most loved in life, belonged in a large proportion to a race and creed which are not mine. Swift and Molyneux, Flood and Grattan, were not only Protestants, but the sons of English officials serving in Dublin courts and bureaux. Curran, Tone, and Father Mathew were the descendants of Cromwellian settlers. The father of the best Irishman I have ever known, or ever hope to know, who has been the idol of two generations of students and thinkers, was a Welshman, wearing the uniform of an English regiment. The price of peace in Ireland was simple and specific. To proffer reforms and revisions of the existing system in lieu of National Government was insensate. If a sane man had been put into a lunatic asylum and the administration of his estate given to strangers, it would be idle to offer him ameliorations of his condition as a remedy. What he wants is to get out. A softer bed and more succulent fare are good things doubtless, but what are they worth to a *détenu* impatient to escape from bonds and resume the control of his life?

It is tragical to recall the cordial sympathy with which these sentiments were received by Protestants of the professional classes, by officials, and by the journalists of the Conservative party. Irish Nationalists of the extremest type also welcomed this solution of our difficulties. There was only one class intractable—the Irish gentry. I prefer that they should be judged by one who knew them more intimately, and perhaps judged them more considerately, than I did. The Rev. Dr. Galbraith, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, was the ablest and most steadfast of the Protestant middle class who had joined Mr. Butt's Home Rule movement. I had been absent thirty years from Ireland, and I asked him to advise me who were the leading men among the gentry able to influence them, and perhaps entitled to speak for them. His answer was that there were no such persons :

‘ Trinity College, Dublin : February 22, 1885.

‘ MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,—I am much flattered by

your addressing me on so important a question, yet I read your letter with a melancholy interest. I need hardly say that I quite concur in your political opinions with regard to Ireland, but I am sorry to say that the Protestant gentry of Ireland are as blind to the future as ever they were. They stand on the brink of a precipice, and don't seem to be aware of it. Within the last few days, I may say, they have begun to perceive that the English Conservatives are prepared to throw them over. You must have seen by the time you read this of their deputation to Sir Stafford Northcote, asking that something should be done for the "Loyal Minority" with new Franchise and Redistribution Scheme, and his cold and slighting answer.

'A handful of them have met in a back parlour in London to found an "Independent Irish Conservative Party," bless the mark!

'One hundred and three years ago they met in College Green with colours flying, drums beating, and cannon loaded to demand and insist on their rights. Alas! how changed! I see no hope for them unless God works a miracle. There is not a single man with brains among them, but one, but he has no legs and could not lead even if he had a mind to. You perceive I give them up. From my position I ought to wish them well. Not that they have done much for "Old Trinity"; quite the opposite. Yet I do wish them well, but their cause is hopeless.

'I am sorry to have to write such a letter, especially to a man like you, who has spent a long life in serving Ireland and wishes to crown it by a glorious effort.

'Believe me, yours sincerely,

'JOSEPH A. GALBRAITH.'

Lord Carnarvon might attain better access than I could to the Irish gentry, such as they were, and a notable English member of Parliament, who has been much heard of since as the leader of a clamorous parliamentary group, made inquiries for him among the landed and professional classes. To illustrate how securities for sensitive interests might be obtained, I at the same time wrote a series of papers in the 'Freeman's Journal' on 'Colonial Constitutions,' which Lord Carnarvon found very useful.

'I have read,' he wrote, 'your articles on "Colonial Constitutions" with great interest, and I am glad to see that there is another in to-day's "Freeman." I hope that you will continue them, for I am satisfied that they are very useful.'

In Whig society in Dublin at that time there was manifestly a growing conviction, and not by any means a too cheerful one, that the great change was coming. But old officials, and men who had prospered in finance and speculation, were intractable. 'What does the man want?' said one of these to me at a dinner party, speaking of Lord Carnarvon. 'He has got all a sensible man can hope for or desire—high rank, an adequate fortune, charming wife, political and social influence—what the d—l more can he hope to get by this new "will o' the wisp" ? He may lose much, but he can gain nothing worth having.' It would have been talking an unknown tongue to tell my interlocutor that these great gifts of fortune which Lord Carnarvon enjoyed implied corresponding duties from which an honourable man dare not shrink.

I saw Lord Carnarvon as often as his engrossing engagements would permit, and he made occasional visits to London. In one of these visits he fulfilled a



purpose which he had long held of seeing Mr. Parnell personally. He was naturally anxious to ascertain the views of the parliamentary leader of the limits and conditions to which the Nationalists would consent, if a statutory Parliament were created. He had certainly no intention of promising Home Rule to Mr. Parnell, but such a conference would naturally raise hopes that as far as he was concerned he wished it to come, as no doubt he did. But he guarded himself always with the scrupulous care of a conscientious gentleman against committing anybody. He thought it would be discreet to see a second member of the party, and I told him I regarded Mr. Justin McCarthy as next in importance to the leader; and he had a conversation with him, which I think took place before his interview with Mr. Parnell. None of these proceedings were communicated to Mr. Dwyer Gray, and as that gentleman was bound to specify from day to day in his newspaper the position and prospects of the Irish question, he grew, not unnaturally, discontented and complained to me. I told him that I considered as strictly confidential all communications with Lord Carnarvon, and could not utter a word, but that his complaint, in my opinion, was a reasonable one, and I would ask Lord Carnarvon to receive him personally, and he doubtless would tell him as much as he thought fit of his purpose and proceedings. Mr. Gray was received by Lord Carnarvon more than once, I think, and communicated with Mr. Parnell on the situation. But he respected my confidential relations with Lord Carnarvon, and asked me no more questions.

There can be no doubt that Lord Salisbury and that inner Cabinet of the party which controls all administration were habitually informed of what Lord

Carnarvon was doing, and were, it may be fairly assumed, weighing the policy of conceding what the Irish demanded, as Pitt weighed the policy of conceding the Catholic claims. I had soon reason to fear that their conclusions were not favourable to our demand. At the beginning of August Lord Carnarvon had need to go to London, saw his colleagues, and returned to Dublin much perturbed. He announced his intended run to England in this note :

‘ Vice-Regal Lodge, Dublin : July 29, 1885.

‘ DEAR SIR GAVAN DUFFY,—You will have seen in the papers the death of Lady Chesterfield, which makes it necessary for me to leave Ireland for the funeral, which is on Friday. As I shall then be in England, I must go on to London to see my colleagues, and cannot be back till Monday night at earliest.

‘ I have been unable to settle this till this morning, but I write at once to ask you whether you can come over here this afternoon instead of to-morrow.

‘ I am engaged to be in Dublin by 4 P.M., and have not one moment after that hour at my disposal ; but any time this morning I am quite free. About a quarter before one, *if quite convenient to you*, would on the whole suit me best. Pray excuse the haste with which I write, and

‘ Believe me, yours very sincerely,

‘ CARNARVON.’

After his return I saw in a moment that his high hopes were chilled, that he had not found the assistance from his colleagues which he anticipated, and would not be in a position to satisfy the expectations he had raised. I shall not attempt to report a conversation at

such a distance of time, but Lord Carnarvon used one phrase which I concluded was an echo from Hatfield : 'We might gain,' he said, 'all you promise in Ireland by taking the course you suggest, but we should lose more in England.' This was the keynote of the policy adopted by the Government in the autumn of 1885. Lord Carnarvon was willing and anxious to do all he could, but it was manifest he could do very little when such a sentiment possessed his colleagues.

Lord Carnarvon did not despair of having the Irish question reconsidered after the General Election. It seemed to me, however, highly improbable that it would be more favourably considered when the fight for a majority was over than when Irish support at the hustings was of vital importance. I did not doubt Lord Carnarvon's good faith ; but I altogether doubted that he would obtain the co-operation of men who came to the conclusion that they had more to lose in England than to gain in Ireland. I told him I would leave Ireland to avoid any responsibility for the course taken at the General Election. He was in personal communication with the leader of the Irish party and with two of his principal lieutenants, and it was their duty to determine whether they would be justified in supporting the Government at the coming election without the certainty of any political compensation. I would tell Mr. Dwyer Gray what I thought of the situation and the disappointment I had met with.

Before leaving Ireland I gave an interview to a representative of the 'Freeman's Journal,' in which I answered several pertinent questions. To the inquiry what the Government were going to do, I replied that of the intentions of the Government I could say nothing, but I had talked to men of all parties and

classes in Ireland, and there never was so much disposition to consider the question of Home Rule as one that must be dealt with. To questions about the disposition of the gentry I replied that if they did not fall in with the present movement the consequences would probably be disastrous to them. The most shameful fiscal system in any civilised country was the one by which three-and-twenty gentlemen in a grand jury impose taxation, often for the improvement of their own property upon a rack-rented tenantry. And the declared enemy of monopoly, Mr. Chamberlain, when his turn came, might be counted on to make short work of that system. The English Radicals generally were of opinion that the cost and trouble of misgoverning Ireland have come from the habit of protecting Irish landlords in the exercise of a feudal tyranny, and that a prodigious saving might be effected by simply ceasing to protect them.

After I left Ireland I fulfilled an engagement to spend a few days at the country house of a public man who had been one of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the last Liberal Cabinet and became a colleague in the ensuing one. He naturally spoke of the design of the Irish electors to vote against the party who had disestablished the Irish Church and gave Ireland a popular land code and a popular franchise.

I told him that I sympathised with the intention of the Irish electors to support the Tories at the poll when I thought the Tory Government were about to consider the Home Rule question favourably, but I had no longer any confidence in that intention. I added that I could not doubt from some recent speeches that Mr. Gladstone was gradually approaching Home Rule, and if he could be induced to make a satisfactory

avowal on that question before the Dissolution the Irish electors would undoubtedly prefer candidates who adopted his opinion. To make sure that they should, I would be willing to return immediately to Ireland and confer with the leaders of the Irish party. The difficulties of premature action were of course serious ; but there is no necessity of dwelling further on the subject, as nothing came of this inchoate negotiation.

When the General Election took place, this was the result of the contest : Gladstonians elected, 333 ; Conservatives, 251 ; Irish Nationalists, 86. Mr. Parnell had supported the Conservatives in England and Ireland, but his speeches during the election did not at all echo the spirit of fierce hostility to the Gladstonian party which animated the address to the Irish electors in England. Conservatives and Parnellites united would make a majority of four in the new Parliament, but this was not a working majority, and there was no longer any real harmony between the two parties. On the other hand, a union of the Gladstonians and Parnellites would make an effective majority, and this was a result widely anticipated.

The story of Mr. Gladstone's pronouncement for Home Rule and the loyal adhesion which Irish Nationalists gave him is beside my present purpose. But it was in this new relation that Mr. Parnell committed what I consider the most serious offence of his political life. He disclosed to Parliament and the public the conversations with Lord Carnarvon, which were essentially private. If Lord Carnarvon had renounced and deserted the opinions which he held before the General Election, some excuse might be found for Mr. Parnell holding him to account for his backsliding. But Lord Carnarvon had not altered at all ; simply, he

had failed to induce his colleagues to co-operate with him.

On the second reading of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, Mr. Parnell, on the twelfth night of the debate, said: 'When the Tories were in office we had reason to know that the Conservative party, if they should be successful at the polls, would have offered Ireland a statutory legislature with a right to protect her own industries, and that this would have been coupled with the settlement of the Irish land question on the basis of purchase, on a larger scale than that now proposed by the Prime Minister.'

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, later in the debate, said: 'I must, for myself and for my colleagues, state, in the plainest and most distinct terms, that I utterly and categorically deny that the late Conservative Government ever had any such intention.'

*Parnell.* 'Does the right hon. gentleman mean to deny that that intention was communicated to me by one of his own colleagues—a Minister of the Crown?'

*Sir M. Hicks-Beach.* 'Yes, sir, I do (cries of "Name"), to the best of my knowledge and belief; and if any such statement was communicated by anyone to the hon. member, I am certain he had not the authority to make it. (Renewed cries of "Name.") Will the hon. member do us the pleasure to give the name to the House?'

*Parnell.* 'The right hon. gentleman has asked me a question which he knows is a very safe one. (Cries of "Oh!") I shall be very glad to communicate the name of his colleague when I receive his colleague's permission to do so.' (Cries of "Oh!" "Name!")

*Sir M. Hicks-Beach.* 'Insinuations are easily made. To prove them is a very different thing; and I

have observed that the rules of the code of honour of hon. members below the gangway step in at the point when proof becomes necessary.'<sup>1</sup>

Things had now reached a point which any man of parliamentary experience might have foreseen, when privacy could not be maintained, and Lord Carnarvon's name was disclosed in the newspapers. Lord Carnarvon immediately justified himself in the House of Lords. He had certainly not entitled Mr. Parnell to declare that the Conservative party had proffered Ireland a statutory Parliament in case of their success at the polls, though he had inquired into the nature of the measure which in Mr. Parnell's opinion would satisfy Ireland, and expressed his own willingness that such a measure should be conceded. And as he had certainly communicated to Lord Salisbury and other of his colleagues the nature of his parley with Mr. Parnell, Sir M. Hicks-Beach was not justified in the sweeping nature of his denial.

Speaking for himself, Lord Carnarvon said: 'I would gladly see some limited form of self-government, not in any way independent of Imperial control, such as may satisfy real local requirements and, to some extent, national aspirations. I would gladly see a settlement where, the rights of property and of minorities being on the whole secured, both nations might rest from this long and weary struggle, and steady and constitutional progress might be patiently and gradually evolved.' And with respect to his colleagues, in a later speech Lord Carnarvon said: 'I should have been wanting in my duty if I had failed to inform my noble friend at the head of the Government of my intention of holding that meeting with Mr. Parnell,

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, vol. cccvi. pp. 1199-1200.

and of what had passed between us at the interview, at the earliest possible moment. Accordingly, both by writing and by words, I gave the noble Marquis as careful and as accurate a statement as possible of what had occurred within twenty-four hours after the meeting, and my noble friend was good enough to say that I had conducted that meeting with perfect discretion.'

The case will now, I think, be plain to any experienced reader.

It is my personal belief that Mr. Parnell ought not, for any party gain, to have made public these strictly private negotiations; but when the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, confessing himself a Home Ruler, though speaking strictly for himself alone, entered into such negotiations and made such inquiries in July, it was not strange that Mr. Parnell thought that if his party obtained a majority at the polls in August by the help of Irish votes they would be prepared to make the concession that Irish voters desired. His fault was not to believe this, but to make a positive assertion of what was a mere hypothesis, and to refer at all in public to transactions covered by an honourable confidence. But the disclosure could not injure Lord Carnarvon; he sincerely desired to concede Home Rule to Ireland and to induce his colleagues to co-operate with him in the concession. It was an honourable and public-spirited design, and its failure was in no respect discreditable to him.



## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1885

THE election campaign of 1885 was practically opened by Lord Salisbury in a speech at the Mansion House on July 29.

Referring to the charge that the Tories were coquetting with the Irish, the Prime Minister justified the conduct of the Government in dropping the Crimes Act, and defended the policy of Lord Carnarvon in ruling by the ordinary law. That policy, he declared, was the logical outcome of the Franchise Act of 1884, for to extend the suffrage and at the same time to ignore the voice of the people was impossible. This was the first bid for the Irish vote.

Parliament was prorogued on August 11. On August 15 we find Parnell at Aughavannah, enjoying some sport, but not unmindful of business. He wrote to Mr. McCarthy:

*Parnell to Mr. McCarthy*

'Aughavannah, Aughrim: August 15, 1885.

'MY DEAR MCCARTHY,—Will you kindly give — a cheque for 100*l.* out of the fund at your and Biggar's disposal?

'I have reason to believe that —'s affairs are not in a good position, so much so that he fears to accept the

position on the Royal Commission on Trade Depression, lest his financial arrangements might come to a climax this autumn. It would be a public calamity to permit him to be overwhelmed or driven from public life; so do you not think he might be spared, say, 300*l.* out of the fund?

‘We have been having nice weather here the last two or three days, and some sport. I am sending you a brace of birds by parcel post this morning.

‘Yours very truly,

‘CHAS. S. PARNELL.

‘P.S.—I am glad to say that I am informed Davitt shows some signs of modifying his very offensive recent action, so that there may now be some chance of avoiding an open rupture, at all events for a time.’

Nine days later Parnell took the field, raising the Home Rule flag, and saying his people would fight under it alone. The Irish platform, he declared, would consist of only one plank—legislative independence. Speaking at Dublin on August 24 he threw down the gage of battle:

‘I say that each and all of us have only looked upon the Acts—the legislative enactments which we have been able to wring from an unwilling Parliament—as means towards an end; that we would have at any time, in the hours of our deepest depression and greatest discouragement, spurned and rejected any measure, however tempting and however apparently for the benefit of our people, if we had been able to detect that behind it lurked any danger to the legislative independence of our land. . . . It is admitted by all parties that you have brought the question of Irish legislative independence to the point of solution. It

is not now a question of self-government for Ireland ; it is only a question as to how much of the self-government they will be able to cheat us out of. It is not now a question of whether the Irish people shall decide their own destinies and their own future, but it is a question with, I was going to say, our English masters—but we cannot call them masters in Ireland—it is a question with them as to how far the day, that they consider the evil day, shall be deferred. You are, therefore, entitled to say that so far you have done well, you have almost done miraculously well, and we hand to our successors an unsullied flag, a battle more than half won, and a brilliant history. . . . I hope that it may not be necessary for us in the new Parliament to devote our attention to subsidiary measures, and that it may be possible for us to have a programme and a platform with only one plank, and that one plank National Independence.'

This speech roused England. The Press with one voice denounced the Irish leader and the Irish programme. The 'Times' said an Irish Parliament was 'impossible.' The 'Standard' besought Whigs and Tories 'to present a firm uncompromising front to the rebel Chief.' The 'Daily Telegraph' hoped that the House of Commons would not be 'seduced or terrified into surrender.' The 'Manchester Guardian' declared that Englishmen would 'condemn or punish any party or any public man who attempted to walk in the path traced by Mr. Parnell.' The 'Leeds Mercury' did not think the question of an Irish Parliament worth discussing ; while the 'Daily News' felt that Great Britain could only be saved from the tyranny of Mr. Parnell by 'a strong Administration composed of advanced Liberals.'

Lord Hartington was the first English statesman who took up the gage thrown down by the Irish leader. Speaking at Waterfoot on August 29, he said that 'Mr. Parnell had for once committed a mistake by proclaiming that Ireland's sole demand was an Irish Parliament, adding that all England would now unite in resisting "so fatal and mischievous a proposal."' Parnell, in reply, hurled defiance at the leader of the Whigs, and indeed at all England. Responding to the toast of 'Ireland a nation,' at the Mansion House, Dublin, on September 1, he said: 'I believe that if it be sought to make it impossible for our country to obtain the right to administer her own affairs, we shall make all other things impossible for those who strive to bring that about. And who is it that tells us that these things are impossible? It is the same man who said that local government for Ireland was impossible without impossible declarations on our part. These statements came from the lips which told us that the concession of equal electoral privileges to Ireland with those of England would be madness; and we see that what was considered madness in the eyes of the man who now tells us that Ireland's right to self-government is an impossibility, has been now conceded without opposition, and that the local self-government which was then also denied to us from the same source, is now offered to us by the same person, with a humble entreaty that we may take it in order that we may educate ourselves for better things and for further powers. . . . Well, gentlemen, I am not much given to boasting, and I should be very unwilling to assume for myself the rôle of a prophet; but I am obliged, I confess, to-night to give you my candid opinion, and it is this—that if they have not succeeded

in "squelching" us during the last five years, they are not likely to do so during the next five years, unless they brace themselves up to adopt one of two alternatives, by the adoption of either one of which we should ultimately win, and perhaps win a larger and heavier stake than we otherwise should. They will either have to grant to Ireland the complete right to rule herself, or they will have to take away from us the share—the sham share—in the English constitutional system which they extended to us at the Union, and govern us as a Crown colony.'

Two days afterwards (September 3) Lord Randolph Churchill addressed a meeting at Sheffield, but said not a word about Home Rule. Mr. Chamberlain was the next English statesman who appeared upon the scene. Addressing a meeting at Warrington on September 8, he said: 'Speaking for myself, I say that if these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into competition for it. This new programme of Mr. Parnell's involves a greater extension than anything we have hitherto known or understood by Home Rule; the powers he claims for his support in Parliament are altogether beyond anything which exists in the case of the State Legislatures of the American Union, which has hitherto been the type and model of Irish demands, and if this claim were conceded we might as well for ever abandon all hope of maintaining a united kingdom. We should establish within thirty miles of our shores a new foreign country animated from the outset with unfriendly intentions towards ourselves. Such a policy as that, I firmly believe, would be disastrous and ruinous to Ireland herself. It would be dangerous to the security of this country, and under these circum-

stances I hold that we are bound to take every step in our power to avert so great a calamity.'

On September 16 Mr. John Morley came to the front, protesting against separation, but acquiescing in some system of Home Rule fashioned on the Canadian model.

What was Mr. Gladstone doing all this time? In answering this question I am obliged, in justice to Mr. Gladstone, to import so insignificant a person as myself into the narrative.

On August 11 I received a letter from a well-known English publicist asking me to call upon him, as he desired my help 'on a subject connected with the Union between England and Ireland.' I called. He opened the conversation by saying, 'Well, I have asked you to call upon me at the suggestion of a great man—in fact, a very great man. I won't mention his name now, but you will probably guess it. He thinks that this Irish question—this question of Home Rule—has now come to the front and must be faced. He wishes me to publish some articles, not on Home Rule, but on the Irish case generally. They must be dispassionate and historical, and he named you as the man to write them.' I suggested that the great man probably meant articles which would give some account of Ireland during the Union, which would, in fact, deal with the question whether the Union had proved a successful experiment or not. 'Exactly,' said the editor, 'and the articles must be written, not from the point of view of a political partisan, but from the point of view of an historical student.' I said I would be happy to write the articles if he liked, but that I could suggest someone who would do it infinitely better, and whose name would carry weight. 'Who?'

‘Sir Gavan Duffy, who is now in London.’ It was finally arranged that I should see Sir Gavan Duffy and ask him.

‘This means,’ said Sir Gavan Duffy, ‘that Gladstone is going to take up Home Rule; and we ought certainly to help him in any way we can.’ Sir Gavan, however, thought that we ought to come to closer quarters with the question than had been suggested by the editor. ‘The article ought,’ he said, ‘to be a Home Rule article point blank.’ I immediately communicated his views to the editor, who, however, was not prepared to go so far as the veteran Young Irelander. After some further *pourparlers* it was decided to let the matter ‘hang fire’ for a month, as I was leaving town. Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone had gone to Norway. He returned in September, and on the 18th of that month issued the famous Hawarden manifesto. I need not deal with that remarkable document generally, but the paragraph relating to Ireland must be set out :

‘In my opinion, not now for the first time delivered, the limit is clear within which the desires of Ireland, constitutionally ascertained, may, and beyond which they cannot, receive the assent of Parliament. To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness, and strength.’ And he added, ‘I believe history and

posterity will consign to disgrace the memory of every man, be he who he may, on whichever side of the Channel he may dwell, that, having the power to aid in an equitable arrangement between Ireland and Great Britain, shall use the power, not to aid, but to prevent or retard it.'

Sir Gavan Duffy sent this paragraph to me, saying: 'It is quite clear that Gladstone means to take up Home Rule, and I am more convinced than ever that the proper course is to write an article on Home Rule developing some scheme for an Irish Constitution. Then the question will be put fairly before the country. I am willing to write this article, taking the inclosed paragraph as my text.' I called upon the editor to tell him what Sir Gavan Duffy had said. He declined, however, to take an article on those lines. 'You must,' he said, 'write the article yourself on the lines you have already laid down. I told you that I had asked you to come to see me at the suggestion of a great man. Well, it is Mr. Gladstone himself, and the lines you have laid down are the lines he approves of for the first article at all events. In the second article we may come to closer quarters on the question.' At length I agreed to write the article. I understood that a proof was sent to Mr. Gladstone, and that he was satisfied with it. It was published in November.<sup>1</sup> About that time I first met Mr. Gladstone. He was then, as always, courteous and agreeable, and showed an unmistakable interest in Ireland; but in the short conversation we had the words 'Home Rule' were not mentioned. I spoke of the 'Irish Liberals,' and said they would be swept off the board at the General

<sup>1</sup> Sir Gavan Duffy suggested the title: 'Irish Wrongs and English Remedies.'



Election. 'The Irish Liberals,' he said, with an expression of sublime scorn which I shall never forget, 'the Irish Liberals! Are there any Liberals in Ireland? Where are they? I must confess [with a magnificent roll of the voice] that I feel a good deal of difficulty in recognising these Irish Liberals you talk about; and [in delightfully scoffing accents, and with an intonation which had often charmed me in the House of Commons] I think Ireland would have a good deal of difficulty in recognising them either' [laughing ironically]. He asked me if I thought the Irish Tories would hang together: for there had been a foolish rumour at the time of a split in the Tory ranks. I said, 'Yes,' that the Tories and the Nationalists would divide the representation of the country between them. This ended the conversation. It was very short, but I carried away two clear ideas: (1) that Mr. Gladstone's mind was full of Ireland; (2) that he now foresaw the revolution which the Franchise Act of 1884 would make in the Irish representation.

While Mr. Gladstone was thinking out the Irish question, Lord Salisbury did not neglect the subject. At Newport, in Monmouthshire, on October 7, the Prime Minister boldly faced the Home Rule problem. He said:

'The Irish leader has referred to Austria and Hungary. . . . Some notion of Imperial Federation was floating in his mind. . . . In speaking of Imperial Federation, as entirely apart from the Irish question, I wish to guard myself very carefully. I deem it to be one of the questions of the future. . . . But with respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan or suggestion which gives me, at present, the slightest ground for anticipating

that in that direction we shall find any substantial solution of the problem.'

Here certainly there was no promise of Home Rule, yet the passage excited much comment in Whig, Tory, and Nationalist circles. Lord Salisbury knew what Parnell had demanded—an Irish Parliament; the 'name and fact.' Yet he did not pooh-pooh the proposition. He did not, like Mr. Chamberlain, put down his foot and cry *non possumus*. On the contrary, he showed a willingness to argue the point; he was conciliatory, he was respectful—a remarkable departure from his usual style in dealing with political opponents and disagreeable topics. The Newport speech was in truth a counter move to the Hawarden manifesto. 'I promise you,' Parnell had said some weeks previously, 'that you will see the Whigs and Tories vying with each other to settle this Irish question.' So far, however, he made no public comment either on the Hawarden manifesto or the Newport speech. He waited for further developments. Meanwhile everything was going precisely as he wished. Whigs and Tories were bidding against each other for his patronage. He was master of the situation. On October 12 the most important pronouncement hitherto made on the Irish question was delivered by Mr. Childers, the friend and confidant of Mr. Gladstone, at Pontefract. He was the first English politician who had courage to grapple with details. He was ready, he said, to give Ireland a large measure of local self-government. He would leave her to legislate for herself, reserving Imperial rights over foreign policy, military organisation, external trade (including customs duties), the post office, the currency, the national debt, and the court of ultimate appeal. Mr. Childers by himself did not carry much weight, but it

was generally supposed that he represented Mr. Gladstone. 'This,' said Sir Gavan Duffy, 'is the voice of Childers, but the hand of Gladstone;' and what Sir Gavan Duffy said, Parnell felt. He had 'played' the Tories up to this point. He now resolved 'to play' Mr. Gladstone.

On October 30 he stated to a reporter of the 'New York Herald,' for the benefit of his American allies, that while no English statesman 'had absolutely shut the door against the concession of a very large measure of legislative independence to Ireland,' Mr. Gladstone had made strides in that direction.

'In his great and eloquent appeal to public men to refrain from any act or word which might further embitter the Irish difficulty, or render full and calm consideration more difficult, he administered a rebuke to the Radical section of his following, who, in fear that an Irish Parliament might protect some Irish industries, were commencing to raise a shrill alarm on this score. Mr. Gladstone's declaration that legislative control over her own affairs might be granted to Ireland, reserving to the Imperial Parliament such powers as would insure the maintenance of the supremacy of the Crown and of the unity of the Empire, is in my judgment the most remarkable declaration upon this question ever uttered by an English statesman. It is a declaration which, if agreement as to details could be secured, would, I believe, be carefully considered by those of my countrymen at home and abroad who have hitherto desired the separation of Ireland from England by any and every means, because they have despaired of elevating the condition of their country, or of assuaging the misery of our people, so long as any vestige of English rule is permitted to remain.'

‘Why do you not give guarantees,’ the reporter asked, ‘that legislative independence will not be used to bring about separation?’

Parnell answered with characteristic directness, honesty, and courage: ‘I refuse to give guarantees because I have none of any value to give. If I were to offer guarantees I should at once be told they are worthless. I can reason only by analogy, and point to what has happened in our time in the relation of other States placed in similar circumstances to England and Ireland, but cannot guarantee absolutely what will happen if our claims are conceded. I have no mandate from the Irish people to dictate a course of action to those who may succeed us. (When the Irish Parliament has been conceded, England will have a guarantee against separation in the presence of her army, navy, and militia, and in her occupation of fortresses and other strong places in the country; but she will have far better guarantees, in my opinion, in the knowledge of the Irish people that it is in their power by constitutional means to make the laws which they are called upon to obey just and equitable.)’

On November 9 Mr. Gladstone set out on his second Midlothian campaign. That night he made two apparently contradictory statements on the Irish question at Edinburgh. He said:

1. ‘What Ireland may deliberately and constitutionally demand, unless it infringes the principle connected with the honourable maintenance of the unity of the Empire, will be a demand that we are bound at any rate to treat with careful attention. . . . To stint Ireland in power which may be necessary or desirable for the management of matters purely Irish would be a great error, and if she were so stinted, the end that any

such measure might contemplate could not be attained.'

2. 'Apart from the terms Whig and Tory, there is one thing I will say, and will endeavour to impress upon you, and it is this—it will be a vital danger to the country and the Empire if at a time when the demand of Ireland for large powers of self-government is to be dealt with there is not in Parliament a party totally independent of the Irish vote.'

The first of these statements—so everyone said—meant Home Rule; the second might have meant anything but Home Rule.

On November 10 Parnell addressed a great meeting at Liverpool. Brushing aside the second of Mr. Gladstone's statements, he fastened at once on the first, and tried to coax the Liberal leader still further forward in the direction of Home Rule:

'Although in many respects vague and unsatisfactory, the Edinburgh speech was,' he declared, 'the most important announcement upon the Irish national question which had ever been delivered by any English Minister,' and he complimented Mr. Gladstone 'on approaching the subject of Irish autonomy with that breadth of statesmanship for which he was renowned.' Still he could not help reminding the Liberal leader that until the Irish question was disposed of it would be impossible for any English question to proceed. He concluded by inviting Mr. Gladstone to frame a constitution for Ireland, 'subject to the conditions and limitations for which he had stipulated regarding the supremacy of the Crown and the maintenance of the unity of the Empire.'

But Mr. Gladstone was not to be coaxed. He replied to Mr. Parnell's invitation on November 17, at

West Calder, in a bantering tone, saying that it was not for him to usurp the functions of a Government. Ministers had kept their counsel on the Irish question. He could not intervene when Ministers were silent. Moreover, he told Parnell that, until Ireland had declared her wishes at the polls nothing could be done. Parnell regarded this speech as simply trifling with the issue. He had tried the *suaviter in modo*, he would now try the *fortiter in re*. Two days after the West Calder speech he authorised the publication of a furious manifesto by the National League of Great Britain denouncing the Liberal party as the embodiment of all that was infamous and base. The Irish electors of Great Britain were called on to vote against 'the men who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the school, the freedom of speech in Parliament, and promise to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal Administration.'<sup>1</sup>

War to the knife was now declared between the Liberals and the Irish, and the fight began in earnest. 'Ireland,' said Parnell, 'has been knocking at the English door long enough with kid gloves. I tell the English people to beware, and be wise in time. Ireland will soon throw off the kid gloves, and she will knock with a mailed hand.' Behind Parnell was a thoroughly united Ireland at home and abroad. In military parlance the formation of his army may be described thus: in the centre the Parliamentarians; left wing, the Clan-na-Gael, and many of the rank and file of the I. R. B.; right wing, the Catholic Church. With these forces, naturally antagonistic, but held together by the attractive personality and iron will of a great com-

<sup>1</sup> The manifesto appeared November 21.

mander, Parnell swept Ireland from end to end. In Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, every county, every borough, was carried by Nationalists. Half Ulster was captured, and even the maiden city of Londonderry and one of the divisions of Orange Belfast fell before the fiery onset of the rebels. The north-east corner of Ulster and Dublin University alone remained in the hands of the 'Loyalists.' Out of a total of 103 Irish members, 85 Home Rulers and 18 Tories were returned. The Whigs were eliminated. In Great Britain the Liberals were confronted in many important centres by the Irish enemy. Liberal majorities were pulled down, Liberal candidates were beaten, and one Nationalist was returned by the Irish vote. 'But for the Nationalist vote,' said the 'Manchester Guardian,' 'the Liberals would have gone back to Parliament with more than their old numbers.' As it was the Liberals went back to Parliament with a majority of 86 over their Tory opponents, thus :

|                                  |   |   |   |   |   |            |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Liberals                         | . | . | . | . | . | 335        |
| Tories                           | . | . | . | . | . | <u>249</u> |
| Liberal majority over the Tories | . |   |   |   |   | 86         |

But Parnell held the balance. By throwing his 86 men upon the side of the Tories he could neutralise the Liberal majority. Whereas by supporting the Liberals he could enable Mr. Gladstone to form a Government with a working majority of 172. Thus the Irish leader was master of the situation.

## CHAPTER XIX

## HOME RULE BILL OF 1886

IN the winter of 1885 Parnell had perhaps reached the height of his unpopularity in England. He had thrust himself into English politics, compromising the Tories and baffling the Whigs. The one party had sacrificed principles to court his alliance, the other had sacrificed his alliance to assert principles inconsistent with the Liberal faith. The former had gone to the country with the cry of 'no coercion' inscribed upon their flag. The latter had gone to the country with the stigma of coercion impressed upon their character. Both had lost. With Parnell's support the Tories could meet the House of Commons on equal terms. Without his support the Whigs could not form a Government.

'Until the Irish question is disposed of,' Parnell had said at Liverpool on November 10, 'it will be utterly impossible for any English question to proceed.' He had kept his word. English parties were reduced to a state of impotence. English questions were brushed aside. Ireland held the field.

An amusing incident, significant of English feeling, occurred some time after the General Election, when Parnell was on his way to London. A stranger, an Englishman from South Africa, accosted him on board



the mail packet. After some preliminary remarks, this gentleman plunged into politics and sharply criticised Parnell's hostile attitude to the British people. Parnell tried to shake off his tormentor, but in vain. On reaching Holyhead he quickly disembarked and shut himself in a first-class carriage, hoping to escape his troublesome companion. However, as the train was moving out of the station the door was pulled open and the Afrikaner jumped in. For a while Parnell resigned himself to the situation with characteristic *sang froid* and patience. The Afrikaner resumed his discourse, vigorously denouncing the Irish rebels.

Suddenly Parnell thrust his hand into his trousers pocket and took out several bits of ore. Stretching his open palm towards the stranger, he said: 'Look at that.' 'By Jove, sir, iron pyrites, I'm d—d,' was the response. The stranger was right; they were iron pyrites. Parnell guessed that the Afrikaner knew something of mining operations, and resolved to make a diversion by showing him the iron pyrites picked up on Avondale. The movement was completely successful. The Afrikaner dropped politics at once, and talked about mining until the Irish leader fell into a gentle slumber.

Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Gladstone, were now brought face to face with the Irish question.

Lord Salisbury's course was clear. The Irish were no longer of any use to him, and he accordingly threw them over. Parnell's relations with the Tories did not survive the General Election. What Lord Salisbury might have done could he have formed a Government with Parnell's help must remain a matter of

conjecture. But an alliance without a *quid pro quo* was impossible.

On learning from Mr. McCarthy that there was no longer any chance of the Tories touching Home Rule, Parnell wrote :

*Parnell to Mr. Justin McCarthy*

‘London : December 17, 1885.

‘MY DEAR MCCARTHY,—I thank you very much for the information contained in your note ; it coincides very much with the impressions I have been able to form. I think, however, that the Conservatives in shrinking from dealing with the question, in addition to bringing about the speedy destruction of their party, are little regardful of the interests of the Irish land-owning class, since they might have obtained guarantees, guarantees which the Liberals, who I am convinced will shortly deal with the question, will have no interest in insisting upon.

‘Yours very truly,

‘CHAS. S. PARNELL.’

After the election, as before, Mr. Chamberlain was against Home Rule, but in favour of a large measure of local government. He would give the Irish the fullest powers for administering their own affairs, but he would not consent to the creation of an Irish Parliament.

It has been said that it was the result of the General Election which made Mr. Gladstone first think of Home Rule. This statement is clearly inaccurate. I have already shown that Mr. Gladstone was thinking of Home Rule in August 1885, and I am obliged to import

myself again into the narrative in order to finish this part of the story.

A few days before Mr. Gladstone left Hawarden for Midlothian I received a letter from the publicist whom I have already mentioned saying, 'When can we have a talk about your second article? Would to-morrow (November 5) suit you?' I called on the morrow. 'Now,' he said, 'I think the time has come to have an article on Home Rule. What I should like you to tell me is, not what you think would be the best system, but what Mr. Parnell would accept. We want to get Mr. Parnell's mind on paper.' I then stated the points on which I thought Parnell would insist, and the points on which he would be prepared to accept a compromise or to give way:

1. There must be an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs. No system of local government would do. It was not local, but national government which the Irish people wanted.

2. Parnell would not stand out upon the question whether there should be one or two Chambers. He would be quite willing to follow Mr. Gladstone's lead on that point.

3. Neither would he stand out on the question whether the Irish members should remain in the Imperial Parliament or be excluded from it. The Catholic Church would certainly be in favour of their retention, in order that Catholic interests might be represented, but the bulk of the Irish Nationalists would not really care one way or the other. The chances are that if they were retained they would rarely attend.

4. What should be Irish and what Imperial affairs? This really was the crux of the whole scheme.

(a) Irish affairs : Irish affairs should include land, education, law and justice, police, customs.

*Publicist.* 'Are you sure about the police?'

'Certainly. Parnell would insist upon the police. If you refused he would make the refusal a *casus belli*. I have no doubt about that.'

*Publicist.* 'Well, customs?'

'Parnell would certainly like the customs. He wants protection for Irish industries, for a time at all events.'

*Publicist.* 'Well, he won't get it. That much is perfectly clear. We won't give him the customs. Would he make the refusal a *casus belli*?'

'No; if you give him land, education, law and justice, and police, he would be satisfied; but these things are vital. He would, however, make a fight for the customs, I think.'

(b) Imperial affairs : Imperial affairs should include foreign policy (peace or war), the army and navy, the Crown, the currency, and the post office.

'The Irish would not trouble themselves much about Imperial affairs. What they want is to have the building up of their own nation in their own hands. Give them an Irish Parliament with full power for the government of Ireland, and they would let the British run the Empire.'

It was finally arranged that I should write an article on these lines. I sent in the 'copy' about November 20, but the article did not appear until January following. It was then published under the title: 'A Federal Union with Ireland.'

Early in December Mr. Gladstone returned to Hawarden. Some time afterwards a communication sanctioned by him was sent to a leading Liberal. It

contained the momentous statement that he was willing to establish a Parliament in Ireland. No details were discussed, but the principle of Home Rule was conceded.

The Liberal in question, though allowed to make free use of this startling intelligence, kept it for awhile to himself. 'Has Lord Hartington been consulted?' was his first question. 'No,' was the answer of Mr. Gladstone's agent, 'but Lord Spencer and Mr. Robert Hamilton (the Irish Under-Secretary) are thoroughly in favour of Home Rule.' 'Lord Spencer and Mr. Hamilton,' rejoined the Liberal, 'are very good, but if Lord Hartington does not throw in his lot with Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Gladstone will be beaten.' 'What about Mr. Morley?' 'We are not sure about John Morley,' was the reply. 'He is now with Mr. Chamberlain, at Birmingham, and Chamberlain is, we hear, preparing a scheme of local government. Whether Morley will go for local government or Home Rule we do not know.'

A day later the Liberal in question was dining at the Reform Club, when Mr. Morley, who had just returned from Birmingham, entered the room. 'What is the news?' asked Mr. Morley. 'What is *your* news?' said the Liberal; 'I hear you have been at Highbury. What is the news there?' Mr. Morley said that he and Chamberlain had differed. 'Well, then, read that,' said the Liberal, producing the Hawarden pronunciamento. 'Is this authentic?' exclaimed Mr. Morley, with an air of astonishment, on reading the document. 'Authentic enough,' was the reply. 'Then,' added Mr. Morley, 'if this be true I will break with Chamberlain and join Mr. Gladstone.' Next day the Liberal told Mr. Gladstone's right-hand man in the business that 'John Morley was all right'; whereupon

the right-hand man exclaimed joyously, 'Hurrah! we were afraid Morley might not join us.'

That evening an 'inspired' paragraph announcing Mr. Gladstone's adhesion to Home Rule was given to Mr. Dawson Rogers, the manager of the National Press Agency. Similar paragraphs—coming, however, from independent sources—were sent to the 'Leeds Mercury' and the 'Standard.' On December 16 the fluttered dove-cotes of the Liberal party knew the worst. 'Mr. Gladstone,' wrote the 'Leeds Mercury,' 'recognises that there is no use in proposing a scheme [for the settlement of the Irish question] which has not some element of stability and permanence. The plan, therefore, which he has in view provides for the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin for dealing with purely Irish affairs.'

Of course Mr. Gladstone was called on to 'explain.' He did explain, through the Central News Agency, thus: 'The statement is not an accurate representation of my views, but is, I presume, a speculation upon them. It is not published with my knowledge or authority; nor is any other, beyond my own public declarations.'

Obviously this 'explanation' did not reassure the public mind. On the contrary, the Liberal dove-cotes were more fluttered than ever.

To do Mr. Gladstone justice, he desired at this crisis to consider the Irish question without any reference to party tactics. Chancing about the middle of December to meet Mr. Arthur Balfour at the Duke of Westminster's, he said to the brilliant young Tory that if Lord Salisbury wished to deal with the Irish demand no obstacles ought to be thrown in his way; that, in fact, both parties should combine to consider

the question of Irish government in a just and liberal spirit. This wise and generous suggestion met with no response from the Prime Minister, who had, indeed, now made up his mind not to touch the Irish question on any account.

On January 12, 1886, Parliament met. An English Radical was deputed by one of Mr. Gladstone's friends to sound Parnell on the situation ; to see how much, or how little, he would take. This Radical was authorised to show a copy of the Hawarden pronunciamento to the Irish leader, but enjoined not to part with it. 'I showed him the paper,' said the Radical, 'one evening in the House of Commons. He glanced hurriedly over it, then coolly folded it and put it into his pocket. "Oh," I said, "you cannot do that. I have been told not to let the paper out of my hand." "Do you suppose," replied Parnell, "that I can give you an answer now on so serious a matter. I must take this paper away, and read it carefully. Then I shall be able to tell you what I think." So saying he buttoned up his coat and walked off. Some days later he saw the Radical again, and said that if Mr. Gladstone brought in a Bill upon the lines foreshadowed in the paper, which was really a forecast of the Home Rule Bill of 1886, the Irish would support it.'

On January 26 the Government declared war against Parnell. Lord Randolph Churchill announced in the House of Commons that a Bill would immediately be introduced to suppress the Land League. The Irish alliance was no longer of any use, and Ministers made a virtue of necessity and repudiated it. 'I will only say,' exclaimed Parnell a year later, 'that history will not record a more disgraceful and unscrupulous *volte-face* than that executed by the Tory party when they

found that our vote was not numerous enough to keep them in office.' Before the end of the month the Tory Government was no more. Mr. Jesse Collings moved an amendment to the Address, expressing regret that the Government had announced no measure enabling agricultural labourers to obtain allotments and small holdings on 'equitable terms as to rent and security of tenure.' The Irish members voted solid for the amendment, and the Government were beaten by 331 to 252 votes. Lord Salisbury resigned immediately, and on February 1 Mr. Gladstone once more became Prime Minister.

He immediately set to work on the Home Rule Bill, the principle of which was the establishment of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs. He consulted no one. He did not take the Cabinet as a whole into his confidence. He evolved the measure out of his inner consciousness. He occasionally spoke to one or two friends, notably Mr. John Morley (Irish Secretary) and Lord Spencer, who were in complete agreement with him on the subject; but he avoided the critics. *The* critic of the Cabinet was Mr. Chamberlain (President of the Local Government Board). From the outset the relations between him and Mr. Gladstone were strained. There seems at this time to have been a personal antipathy between the men. There certainly was no personal sympathy, and to this fact may in some measure be ascribed the defeat of the Home Rule scheme of 1886. 'Gladstone *plus* Chamberlain can carry Home Rule,' Sir Gavan Duffy said to me when rumours were afloat of disunion in the Cabinet, 'but Gladstone *minus* Chamberlain cannot; and what will become of Gladstone if Chamberlain and Hartington combine against him?' Mr.



Chamberlain did not enter the Cabinet as a Home Ruler. He accepted office really to see if a *modus vivendi* between himself and the Prime Minister was possible. Mr. Gladstone was now bent on establishing a Parliament in Ireland. Mr. Chamberlain was still only a local government reformer—though, it must be allowed, a local government reformer on a large scale. Here at once was a difference of principle between the Prime Minister and the President of the Local Government Board. There was also a difference of detail, which, as it seemed to Irish Nationalists, at all events, assumed a magnitude of importance out of proportion to its merits. Mr. Gladstone proposed to exclude the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Chamberlain insisted on their retention. Parnell would certainly have preferred the exclusion of the Irish members. Such an arrangement would in a very marked way have given the Irish Parliament a distinct and independent character, which Irishmen above all things desired. Yet he would not have made the point a *casus belli*. So long as a Parliament and an Executive for the management of Irish affairs generally, subject to certain Imperial reservations, were established he would have been content. To him the question of retention or exclusion was a question of detail—important no doubt, but still detail.

With Mr. Chamberlain the case was different; to him it was a question of principle, and for the reason that he was not a Home Ruler at all. He had his own scheme of national councils, or a national council, always at the back, if not always at the front, of his mind. His real object was to out-manœuvre Mr. Gladstone by substituting local government for Home Rule. If he could succeed in persuading Mr. Gladstone

to retain the Irish members, in their full numbers and for all purposes, in the Imperial Parliament, at the same time establishing a body in Dublin for the transaction of certain specified business, and even for the making of certain specified laws, then, no matter what that body might be called, it would in reality be nothing more nor less at the utmost than a sort of glorified county council. If, on the other hand, the Irish members were excluded altogether, and if the new body were given legislative and executive powers generally, reserving certain subjects for Imperial control, then an Irish Parliament—and practically an independent Irish Parliament, as independent as any colonial Legislature—would beyond all doubt be set up. Hence it came to pass that this question of the exclusion or retention of the Irish members became the crux of the whole scheme. Mr. Chamberlain insisted on it, because he hoped by these tactics to turn Mr. Gladstone's flank, and to convert the Home Rule Bill into a Local Government Bill. But the old parliamentary hand was far too wary to allow his central position to be taken in this way. 'I have drawn this clause,' he said to one who was trying to smooth over the differences between himself and Mr. Chamberlain. 'It is the best I can do. Let Mr. Chamberlain draw a clause for the retention of the Irish members, then we shall be in a position to consider both clauses.' This message was conveyed to Mr. Chamberlain, who shook his head despairingly.

While negotiations were in train between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain on the subject of the retention of the Irish members, a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand but full of mischief, appeared upon the political horizon in Ireland. At the General Election Mr. T. P. O'Connor had been returned for the borough

of Galway and the Scotland division of Liverpool. He elected to sit for Liverpool, and it thus became necessary to choose a new candidate for Galway. Parnell consulted Mr. O'Connor on the subject. 'Do the Galway people,' he asked, 'want a local man?' 'No,' said Mr. O'Connor, 'they do not care; they will accept anyone you propose.' 'Very well. I will propose Captain O'Shea,' said Parnell. The story goes that Mr. T. P. O'Connor had a candidate of his own—not a local man. Having satisfied Parnell that the people of Galway had no predilection on the subject, he naturally felt that the Chief's next question would be, 'Well, whom do you suggest?' when he could have proposed his own nominee.<sup>1</sup> The Chief was a man of surprises. He wished to learn the state of local feeling from Mr. O'Connor; for the rest he had his own plans. Hastening, somewhat surprised and disappointed, from the presence of his leader, Mr. O'Connor went to the Hôtel Métropole, where Mr. Biggar was staying. He told the news to 'Joe,' as the member for Cavan was familiarly called by his friends. 'What!' said Joe—and no one who has not heard Mr. Biggar say *what* can have the most remote idea of how the human voice may perform on that simple word.

'*What!* O'Shea! D——d Whig! He won't sit for Galway, sir; d——d nonsense, sir. I'll go to Ireland at once. I'll stop it; d——d Whig.' Mr. O'Connor's next step was to wire to Mr. Healy, on whom he knew he could rely to make a stand against O'Shea. His third step was to accompany Mr. Biggar to Ireland. If, thought Mr. O'Connor, we can only rouse Galway before O'Shea's candidature is publicly announced, the situa-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. O'Connor's choice was, I believe, the late Mr. Quin, afterwards member for Kilkenny.

tion may be saved. On reaching the Irish capital Mr. O'Connor 'rushed,' as he tells us, to get a copy of the 'Freeman's Journal.' Opening the paper, the first thing which met his eye was the 'fateful announcement' that Parnell had selected Captain O'Shea to sit for Galway.

This statement knocked Mr. O'Connor completely 'out of time.' He now knew that he would have to fight Parnell if he opposed O'Shea, and he was scarcely prepared for that operation. But Biggar did not care a jot. Parnell or no Parnell, he was resolved that O'Shea should not be elected. Mr. Healy was seen immediately. He was full of fight, and determined to stick to Biggar through thick and thin. The majority of the Irish members then in Dublin were, however, unwilling to question Parnell's authority. O'Shea, they said, was certainly an undesirable candidate, but it would be more undesirable to oppose Parnell than to accept his nominee. Mr. O'Connor wavered, but Biggar and Healy said, 'We don't care; we will go to Galway. We will oppose O'Shea whatever happens.' They asked Mr. O'Connor to accompany them, but he preferred for the present to remain in Dublin. Speaking of the matter afterwards, Biggar said, 'I took a return ticket to Dublin and went to Galway. T. P. took a return ticket to Galway and stopped in Dublin.' Biggar and Healy soon roused Galway. A local man—Mr. Lynch—was selected to oppose O'Shea, and the people rallied to their own townsman. Biggar threw himself fiercely into the fight. He did not mince his words in denouncing the candidature of O'Shea; he did not spare Parnell. He told the electors of Galway bluntly and openly that Parnell had chosen O'Shea because O'Shea's wife

was Parnell's mistress. He did not even stop there. He sent a telegram to Parnell in these words: 'Mrs. O'Shea will be your ruin.' Healy saw the telegram and changed its form thus: 'The O'Sheas will be your ruin.' A graver crisis had not arisen during Parnell's leadership than this Galway election. Parnell could defy any man on a political issue, for he was literally an absolutist ruler of his people. But here was a moral issue, which, if pushed to the uttermost, must end in disaster. Biggar's speeches—the first public announcement made of Parnell's unfortunate relationship with Mrs. O'Shea—were suppressed by the 'Freeman's Journal,' but the Irish members knew by private advices that he had set the heather on fire in Galway. They wired to Parnell to hasten from London to the scene of action. Parnell did not answer their telegrams. He was never in a hurry. He had the patience, the reserve, of the strong, self-confident man. He never would move when other persons thought he should move. He moved when in his own opinion the time for action had come. If Mr. O'Connor had told him the people of Galway wished to have a local man, the probability is that Captain O'Shea would never have been nominated. Now, however, that his candidature had been publicly announced retreat was impossible. Parnell never looked back when he had once put his hand to the plough.

On the morning of February 9 he arrived in Dublin. He summoned Mr. O'Connor to his side at once. 'I am going straight on to Galway,' he said, 'by the next train, and I want you to come with me.' The situation, serious enough in its main aspects, was not without a touch of humour. Mr. T. P. O'Connor had come to Ireland to oppose Captain O'Shea. He now suddenly

found himself travelling by express train to support the candidature of that obnoxious individual. Parnell was also accompanied by Mr. Sexton, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. J. J. O'Kelly.

Mr. Biggar was enjoying a hearty breakfast when the news reached Galway that Parnell was *en route* for the city of the Tribes. 'What will we do with Parnell?' asked Mr. Healy. 'Mob him, sir,' said Mr. Biggar, 'mob him.' Long before the train bearing the Chief and his staff arrived an angry multitude had gathered at the railway station. Parnell's visits to the provinces in Ireland were generally like the progress of a sovereign enthroned in the hearts of the nation. Everywhere he was received with reverence, joy, enthusiasm. But the mob at the Galway railway station on February 9 was forbidding, sullen, fierce. How would they receive the Chief? Would they mob him? The train at length steamed into the terminus. The mob growled. Parnell alighted. The crowd scanned him and his companions closely, but not an angry or a disrespectful word was addressed to the 'uncrowned king.' It was clear, however, that the mob were looking for someone with no friendly intent. The object of their search soon appeared. Then there was a yell of passion, a fierce rush, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor was struck at by the foremost man in the throng and nearly swept off his feet. With the true instinct of Connaught peasants, these Galway electors made their late member responsible in the first degree for what had happened. He should have communicated with them, ascertained their views, advised Parnell of their desire to have a local candidate, and saved them from the indignity of being compelled to accept the detested Whig. Mr. O'Connor had done none of these things. Worse still, he had begun by

joining Biggar and Healy in revolt, and ended by coming to Galway to oppose them and to help in forcing O'Shea upon the constituency. The man to be mobbed was not Parnell, but their late member; so thought the men of Galway. Seeing Mr. O'Connor assailed, Parnell sprang to his side in an instant, seized him by the arm and marched him off to the hotel—the mob falling back under the spell of the Chief's resistless influence. Parnell went directly to his room, made a careful toilet, and then came down spick and span, looking more regal than ever, to meet Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy and the Irish members. Healy stated the case against Captain O'Shea. His observations may be summed up in a sentence: O'Shea was a Whig, and therefore unfit to sit for any Irish constituency. Biggar stood by the while, smiling pleasantly. The member for Cavan never looked more peaceful than when bent on war. Parnell listened patiently and attentively, and then said his say briefly and resolutely. O'Shea could not be withdrawn; it might be a question whether he ought to have been brought forward, but having been brought forward he must remain. Parnell's leadership was involved in the issue, and upon that leadership the success of the Irish cause depended. It must not therefore be jeopardised even by the suspicion of a revolt. That was the fiat of the Chief. 'A rumour has been spread,' he said, 'that if Captain O'Shea is withdrawn I would retire from the party. I have no intention of resigning my position. I would not resign it if the people of Galway were to kick me through the streets to-day.' This single sentence, Mr. O'Connor tells us, swept Mr. Healy off his feet. However that may be, the whole business was certainly settled in a shorter time than I now take to tell the story. When

Parnell had concluded, all present, except Biggar, acquiesced readily in his decision. While the conference of the members was going on a vast crowd had collected in the streets impatiently awaiting the word which would rid Galway of O'Shea. Then the news spread that everything had been settled—that O'Shea was to be member for Galway. This was followed by the further intelligence that Parnell would address the people. A great meeting was gathered together. Parnell faced the sullen and dissatisfied crowd. He had, according to Mr. O'Connor, swept Mr. Healy off his feet with a single sentence. He conquered the multitude with two sentences. Stretching forth his left hand, he said: 'I have a Parliament for Ireland within the hollow of my hand.' Then, bringing his right hand down on his left, he added, 'destroy me and you take away that Parliament.' 'It was an impressive sentence, a revelation,' says Mr. Healy. 'The people learned for the first time how near they were to victory. Every man in the crowd was awed, except Biggar.' The people, who up to that point had shown an unwillingness to hear Parnell, now listened with bated breath. The Chief saw his advantage, and quickly followed it up. 'Reject Captain O'Shea, destroy me, and there will arise a shout from all the enemies of Ireland: "Parnell is beaten, Ireland has no longer a leader."' A thrill of emotion ran through the meeting. There was no cheering, no enthusiasm, but complete submission. Come what might the enemy should not be given the opportunity to blaspheme. They would accept O'Shea rather than it should be said they were disloyal to Parnell. That was the decision of the men of Galway. When all was nearly over, when the people were about to disperse, and as Parnell had risen to



leave, Biggar pushed his way to the front, and in deep guttural tones jerked out the words: 'Sir, if Musther Lynch goes to the poll I'll support him.' Parnell made a gentle inclination of the head in response to this characteristic speech of his old friend and retired. Mr. Lynch went to the poll, but was left at the bottom of it by an overwhelming majority.<sup>1</sup> A grave crisis had been averted, but the Galway election of 1886 threw a dark shadow over the fateful career of the Irish leader.

The election over, Parnell returned to London. The 22nd of March was the day originally fixed for the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. But the differences between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain had not yet been settled. So far, indeed, were the two men from agreement that on March 15 Mr. Chamberlain threatened to resign. Writing to Mr. Gladstone he said :

'I gathered from your statements that although your plans are not fully matured, yet you have come to the conclusion that any extension of local government on exclusive lines, including even the creation of a national council or councils for purely Irish business, would now be entirely inadequate, and that you are convinced of the necessity for conceding a separate legislative assembly for Ireland, with full powers to deal with all Irish affairs. I understood that you would exclude from their competence the control of the army and navy and the direction of foreign and colonial policy, but that you would allow them to arrange their own customs tariff, to have entire control of the civil forces of the country, and even, if they thought fit, to establish

<sup>1</sup> At the General Election Parnell had supported the candidature of Captain O'Shea for the Exchange division of Liverpool.

a volunteer army. It appears to me a proposal of this kind must be regarded as tantamount to a proposal for separation. I think it is even worse, because it would set up an unstable and temporary form of government, which would be a source of perpetual irritation and agitation until the full demands of the Nationalist party were conceded. . . . My public utterances and my conscientious convictions are absolutely opposed to such a policy, and I feel that the differences which have now been disclosed are so vital that I can no longer entertain the hope of being of service in the Government. I must therefore respectfully request you to take the necessary steps for relieving me of the office which I have the honour to hold.'

Mr. Gladstone subsequently made some modifications to conciliate Mr. Chamberlain, but in vain. In fact, there was a radical difference between the Prime Minister and the President of the Local Government Board, which could not be overcome. The one was a Home Ruler and the other was not. The latter suggested alterations in the hope of undermining the principle of the Bill. The former held fast to the principle, and avoided every amendment which in his opinion endangered it. In truth, neither trusted the other, and from the outset both had really assumed a position of mutual antagonism.

On March 26 Mr. Chamberlain finally left the Ministry, and was accompanied by Mr. Jesse Collings (Secretary to the Local Government Board), Mr. Trevelyan (Secretary for Scotland), and Mr. Heneage (Chancellor of the Duchy).

After writing the foregoing I called on Mr. Chamberlain, who was good enough to give me his

views with much frankness and fairness. Though there are some parts of the conversation which carry us a little back, and other parts which rather anticipate the narrative, I prefer to set it out, as a whole, in this place.

I saw Mr. Chamberlain at the Colonial Office on February 15, 1898.

I said: 'Mr. Chamberlain, I know that your relations with Mr. Parnell were friendly in the early days. I think you saw a good deal of each other, and you worked together on some questions. You worked together in attacking flogging in the army.'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Not quite worked together, if you mean that we worked on a concerted plan or that we had consultations and conferences. We certainly worked for the same end. Parnell attacked flogging in the army in pursuance of his general policy of obstruction. I am not blaming him. He thought the best thing to do for his cause was to obstruct the business of the House of Commons, and he seized every subject which enabled him to carry out that policy. On this general principle he attacked flogging in the army. I was opposed to flogging in the army because I did not like the thing. Some of my friends who were also opposed to it did not wish to take the question up because Parnell had begun it. I thought that was foolish. I said: "What does it matter who has begun it, if it is a right thing to do? Let us help Parnell, whatever may be his objects, when he is doing the right thing. Let us go in and take the question out of his hands." We did ultimately go in and take a prominent part in the discussion. Parnell then dropped back, and let us fight. He came forward again whenever he saw the question was in danger, or whenever any of our-people flagged. In that sense, if you like,

Parnell and I worked together in abolishing flogging in the army.'

'Did you think him a remarkable man?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Very remarkable. A great man. Unscrupulous, if I may say so. I do not wish to be misunderstood in my meaning of the word "unscrupulous." I mean that he was unscrupulous like every great man. I have often thought Parnell was like Napoleon. He allowed nothing to stand in his way. He stopped at nothing to gain his end. If a man opposed him, he flung him aside and dashed on. He did not care. He did not harbour any enmity. He was too great a man for that. He was indifferent about the means he used to gain his object. That is my view.'

'You say he was unscrupulous. Did you find that he was a man who kept his word?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Certainly. He was a pleasant man to deal with in that respect. He was a good man to make a bargain with, and he had a keen eye for a bargain. He was a great Parliamentarian. He understood politics. He knew that you cannot always get your own way, and that you must sometimes take the best thing you can get at a given moment. There was nothing irreconcilable about him. His main purpose he no doubt always had at the back of his mind, but it did not prevent him from dealing with every important issue that arose. He could approach any question—apart from the subject of an Irish Parliament, which I suppose was his main purpose—and deal with that question for the time being as if no other question existed. My relations with Parnell were business relations, and I found them very pleasant. He sometimes dined with me. I should not say that he was socially

interesting. I thought him, indeed, rather dull. He did not seem to have any conversational powers, and he had no small talk. In business he was very frank.'

'You and he made the Kilmainham treaty?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes. There has been a good deal of discussion about the Kilmainham treaty—about the terms of the treaty, or whether there was any treaty. There was a treaty. And the terms on our side were that we should deal with some phases of the land question—the arrears question, I think. This very Kilmainham treaty is an instance of what I mean when I say that Parnell could divest himself of every subject except the one that was practical at the moment. He did not talk about Home Rule then. He knew it would be useless. He took up a subject which was practicable, and which could be used for the end he then had in view. The Kilmainham treaty was made, the arrears question was taken up, and Parnell got out. That compact would have been carefully kept, and a great change might have been made in affairs in Ireland, but the Phoenix Park murders came and made a difference.'

'The murders led to the Crimes Bill, which was a violation of the treaty?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes; the murders led to that particular Crimes Bill. Had there been no murders there still would have been some sort of Bill for dealing with outrages. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act would have been dropped, but something put in its place.'

'But the Crimes Bill which was passed had been prepared by Lord Cowper and Mr. Forster before they left office?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes; that is so. But *that* Bill'

would not have been introduced if the murders had not been committed.'

'May I ask if Captain O'Shea took any initiative in making the Kilmainham treaty, or was he simply a go-between?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'He took no initiative. He simply took what I said to Parnell, and brought back what Parnell said to me.'

'Parnell called upon you the morning after the Phoenix Park murders. How did he then seem?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes; he called; he and Mr. McCarthy. Parnell looked like a man quite broken down—quite unnerved. He said to me: "I would leave public life at once if I were satisfied it would do any good." I said: "Nonsense, Mr. Parnell; you can do no good by leaving public life, you can only do harm. No one supposes you have any responsibility in this matter. If you were to go away, everyone would say it was because you were afraid—because you were mixed up in some way in the matter. You must remain and exercise a restraining influence." I believe, afterwards, he made a communication to Mr. Gladstone on the subject.'

'Did not Captain O'Shea come in while McCarthy and Parnell were with you? Was not something said about the Kilmainham treaty by O'Shea, and did you not say, "O'Shea, it is not your treaty that is going to be carried out at all; it is another treaty"?''

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I have no recollection of that. If anybody has told you so he may be right. It is a long time ago, but I scarcely think it can be accurate. I think there must be some confusion about dates, for I do not think there was any treaty but the one. Later on another treaty was discussed between Parnell and

me, but that was in '84 or '85. I think your informant must be mixing up the dates. In fact, we were so absorbed in the Phoenix Park murders that morning that I do not think we thought of anything else.'

'May I ask what was the other treaty?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Certainly. It was, I think, in 1884. Perhaps towards the end or the autumn of 1884. O'Shea came to me. He said: "The Kilmainham treaty has broken down. Do not you think that you and Parnell ought to try and come together again, and to see if it is possible to do anything on the subject of Ireland? I think Parnell is anxious to have some sort of settlement." I said that I was quite willing to consider any proposal relating to the government of Ireland, and to discuss any question with Parnell, to see how far it was possible for us to come together. I should add that my authority in this matter is O'Shea. Parnell was staying at his house at this time, and I think that O'Shea was accurate in saying he had come from Parnell, and that Parnell was anxious for a settlement. However, no letters passed between Parnell and myself in the matter, therefore my evidence on the subject is O'Shea. It was then that I proposed the National Councils scheme. My idea, as well as I can recollect now, was this: There was to be a council in Dublin; possibly it would be necessary to have another council in Belfast, but if possible there was only to be one central council. This council should take over the administrative work of all the boards then existing in Dublin. It might besides deal with such subjects as land and education and other local matters.'

'When you say the council should deal with land and education, do you mean that it should legislate?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Not absolutely. I think my idea was that it should take the initiative in introducing Bills, and that it should pass Bills, but that these Bills should not become law until they received the sanction of the Imperial Parliament. If any particular measure was brought in in the council and passed through the council, that measure should then be sent to the House of Commons, and be allowed to lie on the table of the House of Commons for say forty days, and then, if nothing was done upon it, it would become law.'

'That was a bigger scheme than what one ordinarily understands by local government?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Certainly, it was a very big scheme. Perhaps it was too big a scheme. I do not think I should agree to it now, but I was ready to give it then. So far as I could learn, Parnell was not opposed to that scheme; here again I have to depend on O'Shea. I remember another thing in this connection which supports O'Shea. About this time Cardinal Manning asked me to call upon him, and talk over the Irish question. I went to see him, and we discussed this National Councils scheme. I asked him if he thought Parnell would accept it, and if it would be satisfactory to the bishops and priests, for I considered that important. He said he was in a position to speak for the bishops, because he had seen some of them passing through on their way to Rome, and that they were in favour of some such scheme as I had proposed. He said, in fact, that he thought the bishops would prefer a National Councils scheme to an independent Parliament. He also said he thought Parnell would accept it. I told Mr. Gladstone all that had happened, and he quite approved of the National Councils scheme. This was in 1884 or early in 1885. Ultimately I



brought the scheme before the Cabinet, that is, the Cabinet of 1884. I cannot, of course, tell you Cabinet secrets, but it is a public matter that I did submit such a scheme to the Cabinet. Mr. Gladstone was quite in favour of it. Well, the Cabinet rejected it.'

'That is, I suppose, the majority of the Cabinet rejected it?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes, and the very men who afterwards were in favour of a Parliament for Ireland opposed the National Councils scheme most vigorously, and caused its defeat. There never was such a *volte-face*. Mr. Gladstone was very vexed. When that scheme was rejected I did not care how soon the Government went out. We were thrown out in June 1885, and I was very glad. It left me free. Then I took up the Irish question, and I made a speech at some place in the north of London.'

'Holloway?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes; Holloway.<sup>1</sup> That speech, as you know, excited a good deal of criticism. Well, I still stand by that speech. I attacked the bureaucratic system which existed in Ireland, and I expressed my desire to see it changed. The speech was

<sup>1</sup> This is what Mr. Chamberlain said at Holloway: 'I do not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralised and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work, without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by an English official, appointed by a foreign Government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority. I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle.'—June 17, 1885.

made in pursuance of the policy of national councils. It was arranged that Sir Charles Dilke and I should go to Ireland, and lay that policy before the people. Then suddenly our plans were overturned. A statement was made to me that Parnell no longer wished us to go to Ireland, and that he would not have our scheme now; that he had got something better. At this time I believe he was in touch with Lord Carnarvon and the Tories.'

'I have heard it said that Mr. Parnell treated you badly over the national councils business. I should like to know your views?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I never said he treated me badly. I never thought he treated me badly. I think it is idle to talk of Parnell treating me badly, or of my treating Parnell badly. We acted as politicians. He was doing what he thought the best he could for his cause; I was doing the best I could, according to my opinions. But no doubt his action was quite in keeping with his general practice. He would probably have taken national councils if he could not have got anything better, and he would afterwards, I suppose, have pushed on, or tried to push on, for his Parliament. But it was quite like Parnell to take the thing which was feasible at the moment, and national councils perhaps seemed to him feasible in '85. Then he thought he could get something better, and he was resolved to take it. It was quite natural. I do not think I was badly treated at all. I do not think he treated me badly at all. I have never complained.'

'Parnell had, as you know, Mr. Chamberlain, a very difficult battle to fight. It seems to me that his aim was to see how far English statesmen would go, and that he really desired, if I may say so, to play

you all off against each other, and to close with the man who would, in the end, go farthest.'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I think that is very likely.'

'Mr. George Fottrell had something to do with the National Councils scheme?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes, he saw me at that time. He gave me his views, and we talked about the matter generally.'

'Did not Mr. Fottrell write an article in the "Fortnightly" on national councils?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes, he did.'

'Did you see the proofs of the article?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes, I did.'

'May I ask if you did not make some suggestions in the proof?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes, I did.'

I said: 'There is one matter which has puzzled me in considering Parnell's tactics at the moment. It has seemed to me that he ought not to have given you up so soon. You had gone further than any man at the outset. It was natural for him to think that in the end you would be more likely to go the whole way than anybody else. Why did he not keep up negotiations with you? It seems to me he broke them off very suddenly. First he broke them off to deal with Lord Carnarvon, and then he broke them off in dealing with Mr. Gladstone. As a matter of tactics, did he commit a mistake?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I do not know that he did. I suppose he came to the conclusion that I could not be got beyond national councils. He thought, rightly or wrongly, that Lord Carnarvon would go further, and then he opened negotiations, or what seemed to be negotiations, with him. I may say that

I think there was a misunderstanding between Lord Carnarvon and Parnell at that time. However, if he thought Lord Carnarvon and the Tories would go further, it was only natural that he should approach them.'

'It seems to me that in the election campaign of '85, and leading up to it, he fixed his eye chiefly upon Mr. Gladstone, you, and Lord Randolph Churchill, and he seems to have come very suddenly to the conclusion that Mr. Gladstone after all was his man. Why could he not have kept up negotiations with you while he was negotiating with Mr. Gladstone? He broke off with you very abruptly, as I think. Was it not a mistake?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I assume that Parnell was satisfied that he himself could not get me to go beyond national councils; but he probably thought that Mr. Gladstone might persuade me. I think that was his idea. Then he resolved to lean entirely upon Mr. Gladstone, and he trusted that Mr. Gladstone would carry me over. I cannot say that I see any tactical error on his part in that way.'

'I should now like to talk about the Home Rule Bill. I have come to the conclusion, after giving the matter—your speeches and all that has been written and said upon the subject—the best consideration I could, that you were never a Home Ruler in our sense; but there are some points which I should feel obliged if you would clear up for me. You opposed the exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament. I thought at that time, and I think a great many other people thought too, that you were in favour, or that ultimately you came to be in favour, of the principle of Mr. Gladstone's Bill, but that you objected

to the exclusion of the Irish members as a matter of detail. What I should like to ask is, if you objected to the exclusion as a matter of detail, or if you really used that clause for the purpose of attacking the Bill? Was it really your aim to turn Mr. Gladstone's flank by attacking that point?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I wanted to kill the Bill.'

'And you used the question of the exclusion of the Irish members for that purpose?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I did, and I used the Land Bill for the same purpose. I was not opposed to the reform of the land laws. I was not opposed to land purchase. It was the right way to settle the land question, but there were many things in the Bill to which I was opposed on principle. My main object in attacking it, though, was to kill the Home Rule Bill. As soon as the Land Bill was out of the way<sup>1</sup> I attacked the question of the exclusion of the Irish members. I used that point to show the absurdity of the whole scheme.'

'Well, I may say, Mr. Chamberlain, that that is the conclusion I have myself come to. It was strategy, simply strategy.'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I wanted to kill the Bill. You may take that all the time.'

'Mr. Jeyes, in his short life of you—which seems to me a very fair as well as a clever book—says you were once on the point of being converted to Home Rule.'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'He is wrong. I was never near being converted to an Irish Parliament. The national councils was my extreme point. There I stood.'

'I should like to talk to you about what you said on the subject of Canadian Home Rule. I am satisfied

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone introduced a Land Purchase Bill at the same time as the Home Rule Bill, and suddenly dropped it.

that you attacked the exclusion of the Irish members to kill the Bill, but I think you said things about Canada which are open to the interpretation that you might favour the establishment of an Irish Parliament. The matter is not quite clear to me.'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I do not think you should press me too hard. I stated my object was to kill the Bill. I have no doubt that I said many things that may have been open to some such interpretation as you suggest. I will take this case of Canada, though I really cannot recollect very well now what I did say. Still, I think my idea was this. Other people had been talking about Canadian Home Rule besides me, and the point I took up was, What is meant by Canadian Home Rule? Is it meant that the relations between England and Ireland are to be the same as the relations between the Dominion Parliament and England? If that is meant, then it is separation. Mr. Gladstone himself is not prepared to establish the same relations between England and Ireland as exist between the Dominion Parliament of Canada and the Imperial Parliament. Or do you mean such relations as exist between the Dominion Parliament and the Provincial Parliaments? But what are the relations between the Dominion Parliament and the Provincial Parliaments in Canada? Certain powers are delegated by the Dominion to the provincial legislatures, but that is not what the Bill proposes to do with reference to Ireland. It does not delegate certain powers to Ireland. On the contrary, it gives Ireland power to legislate upon Irish matters generally, reserving certain things to the Imperial Parliament. I think that was the line I took. However open I may be to criticism in whatever I said, my aim was, as I say, to kill the Bill.'

'By the way, there is another point, Mr. Chamberlain, that I had forgotten, which I should like to put to you. Going away from the question of Canada, I find that in '85 Parnell was in touch with Lord Carnarvon through Mr. Justin McCarthy, or directly. He was in touch with you through Captain O'Shea. Was he in communication with Mr. Gladstone at this time, directly or indirectly?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes. He was in communication with Mr. Gladstone through a lady.'

'Mrs. O'Shea?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes.'

'Mr. Gladstone has frankly told me that. He told me that he had seen Mrs. O'Shea for the first time in 1882.'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes, he told me the same thing.'

'May I take it that the Cabinet was practically in relation with Parnell through Mrs. O'Shea from 1882?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes.'

'May I ask a word about the Round Table Conference?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'Yes.'

'Well, what was it exactly? What were the points raised exactly?'

*Mr. Chamberlain.* 'I revived my National Councils scheme at the Round Table Conference. I believe they were willing to accept it. They asked Parnell. Parnell would not have it, and that of course made an end in the matter. They thought they could turn him round like Trevelyan, but found they were mistaken.'

On April 8 Mr. Gladstone moved the first reading of the Home Rule Bill. He proposed to establish an

Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management and control of Irish affairs, reserving to the Imperial Parliament the following subjects: the Crown, peace or war, the army, navy, militia, volunteers, defence, &c., foreign and colonial relations, dignities, titles of honour, treason, trade, post office, coinage. Besides these 'exceptions,' the Irish Parliament was forbidden to make any laws respecting (*inter alia*) the endowment of religion, or in restraint of educational freedom, or relating to the customs or excise.

The Dublin metropolitan police were to remain under Imperial control for two years, and the Royal Irish Constabulary for an indefinite period; but eventually all the Irish police were to be handed over to the Irish Parliament. Ireland's contribution to the Imperial revenue was to be in the proportion of one-fifteenth to the whole. All constitutional questions relating to the powers of the Irish Parliament were to be submitted to the Judicial Committee of the English Privy Council. The Irish members were to be excluded from the Imperial Parliament.

The Bill was read a first time without a division, but not without sharp criticism from the Tories and Dissident Liberals. On April 16 Mr. Gladstone introduced a Land Bill, which was, in fact, a pendant to the Home Rule Bill. The chief feature of this measure was a scheme for buying out the Irish landlords and for creating a peasant proprietary. The State was in the first instance to buy the land at twenty years' purchase of the judicial rents, or at the Government valuation, and then sell to the tenants, advancing the purchase money (which involved the issue of 50,000,000*l.* Consols), and giving them forty-nine years to pay it back



at the rate of four per cent. per annum. A Receiver-General was to be appointed, under British authority, to receive the rents and revenues of Ireland, while this scheme was in operation. Thus Mr. Gladstone's complete plan for the pacification of Ireland was an Irish Parliament and a peasant proprietary.

This plan was now discussed throughout the Empire, approved in the main by the vast majority of the Irish people in Ireland, in America, in the Colonies, accepted by the bulk of the Liberal party; but condemned by the Tories and Dissident Liberals. Mr. Gladstone had hoped that the Land Bill, by buying off the hostility of the landlords, would smooth the way for the Home Rule Bill.

He was mistaken. The hostility of the landlords was not bought off, while new issues which troubled his own friends were raised. The Irish did not like the appointment of the Receiver-General, and the Liberals did not like the public expenditure which was in the first instance involved. Tactically, the Land Bill was a blunder, and Mr. Gladstone soon found it out.

On May 10 he moved the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. Lord Hartington moved its rejection, and a debate which lasted until June 7 ensued. In the interval Mr. Gladstone tried to win back the Dissident Liberals. He expressed his willingness to reconsider every detail, if only the principle of the Bill were affirmed. 'Vote for the second reading,' he said in effect; 'consent to the establishment of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management and control of Irish affairs, and let the details wait. The second reading pledges you only to an Irish Parliament. Every other question remains open.' As for the Land Bill, he practically threw it over. 'While

the sands are running in the hour-glass,' he said in an oft-quoted sentence, 'the Irish landlords have as yet given no intimation of a desire to accept a proposal framed in a spirit of the utmost allowable regard to their apprehensions and their interests.' If the landlords were not prepared to accept the Bill he would ask no Liberal to vote for it. In this shape he offered the olive-branch to his old friends. Up to May 28 Mr. Bright had taken no very prominent part in opposition to the Ministerial policy, and there were rumours afloat that he was favourable to the Bills.

I was anxious to learn if there was any foundation for these rumours, and I wrote to Mr. Bright, asking him to give me an interview. He quickly sent the following reply :

'Reform Club : May 28, 1886.

'I expect to be here to-morrow from 12 to 2, and shall be glad to see you, if it be not inconvenient for you to call upon me.'

I called at 12.30. He was sitting in the hall of the club talking to Lord Hartington. I took a place opposite to them, and waited for about an hour. At the end of that time Mr. Bright looked at his watch, rose, said something (smiling) to Lord Hartington (who went away), and then walked across the hall to me.

'Well,' he said pleasantly, 'I have kept you waiting for an hour, but I have been talking about Ireland all the time. I came to the club this morning at 10 o'clock, and I have talked of nothing but Ireland since. Come, sit down.'

I went straight to the point. To talk to Mr. Bright and not go straight to the point would be fatal. 'I have

come, Mr. Bright,' I said, 'to ask if you are in favour of the Home Rule Bill.'

He paused for a moment, looked on the floor, then raised his head and answered: 'I am not. Wait (at a motion of my hand). I am against the Land Bill too; I am against both Bills.'

'I am only interested in the Home Rule Bill, Mr. Bright. May I ask you why you are against it? Are you afraid that Home Rule would lead to religious persecution?'

'No; the fact is the days of religious persecution are gone by. You cannot have it anywhere now. We are all watching each other too much. You know my views of the Irish. They are like most other people—neither better nor worse—and you are not going to have a condition of things in Ireland which is impossible anywhere else. Moreover, if the Irish were disposed to persecute, they would have to be on their good behaviour, living so near a Protestant country. Besides, the Protestants of Ireland are very well able to take care of themselves. I would have more concern for some of the poor Catholics. Remember that it is Catholics and not Protestants who have come under the harrow of the League. (A pause.) I think, though, that some of these fellows [the Irish members] are far too fond of talking of Ireland as a Catholic nation. They do harm. (A pause, and then a smile.) I expect that some of these fellows who talk about Ireland as a Catholic nation are precious bad Catholics. They remind me of the Pope's brass band, Keogh and Sadler. I remember those times. You don't. But I have no fear of a religious persecution.'

'Then do you think that we would try to separate from England if we got an Irish Parliament?'

‘Certainly not. How could you? Why, the thing is madness. Mark, there are people in this country who would be very glad if you would try. That would give them an opportunity of settling the Irish question very quickly. Just think of our population and of yours; then your population is steadily diminishing, and ours always increasing. Separation is absurd. Whether you have a Parliament or not, you can never separate. (A pause.) I do not know that separation would be a bad thing if you could separate far enough.’

I said, quoting a famous passage from one of Mr. Bright’s speeches: ‘If we could be moved 2,000 miles to the westward.’

*Mr. Bright* (smiling). ‘Just so. Many of us would be glad to be rid of you; but we have been thrown together by Nature, and so we must remain. (A pause.) The history of the two countries is most melancholy. Here we are at the end of the nineteenth century, and we do not like each other a bit better. You are as rebellious as ever. I sometimes think that you hate us as much as ever.’

I interposed: ‘It is a sad commentary, sir, on your government.’

*Mr. Bright* (warmly). ‘I know our government has been as bad as a Government could be, but then we have done many things during the past fifty years. You do not thank us in the least.’

I said: ‘Because, as you often pointed out, you have only yielded to force. The Irish tenants do not thank you for the Land Act of 1881. They thank Mr. Parnell and the Land League. Are they wrong?’

*Mr. Bright*. ‘Well, of course I know only too well how much truth there is in what you say about our policy in Ireland. But you do not recognise that there

is an effort now being made in this country to do better by Ireland. If Mr. Gladstone, who has done so much for you, would only persevere on the old lines instead of taking this new step we would yet make everything right in Ireland.'

I remarked: 'Well, sir, I am glad that you think the new step will not lead to separation.'

*Mr. Bright.* 'Oh, no, I am not afraid of that.'

'Do you think that the present Irish representatives would sit in an Irish Parliament, and that they would adopt a policy of public plunder?'

*Mr. Bright.* 'Well, I have said to you already that the Irish are very much the same as other people, and no people in the world would stand these fellows permanently. No; if you had an Irish Parliament you would have a better class of men in it. I quite understand that. I do not mean to say that you would have a better representation at once, for these fellows would try to hold on. But the man who is their master would shake them off one by one, and the people would support him. Mr. Parnell is a remarkable man, but a bitter enemy of this country. He would have great difficulties in the first years of an Irish Parliament, but he might overcome them. Yet many of these fellows hate him (smiling). The Irish hate all sort of government. He is a sort of government.'

'A popular government?'

*Mr. Bright.* 'Well, perhaps so, but even that may not save him in the end. I do not know how long he will be able to control these fellows.'

'Well, Mr. Bright, you are not afraid of a religious persecution, nor separation, nor public plunder. Why do you object to Home Rule?'

*Mr. Bright.* 'I will tell you. I object to this Bill. It either goes too far or it does not go far enough. If you could persuade me that what you call Home Rule would be a good thing for Ireland, I would still object to this Bill. It does not go far enough. It would lead to friction—to constant friction between the two countries. The Irish Parliament would be constantly struggling to burst the bars of the statutory cage in which it is sought to confine it. Persuade me that Home Rule would be a good thing for Ireland, and I would give you the widest measure possible, consistently with keeping up the connection between the two countries.'

I asked: 'You would give us control of the land, police, judges?'

*Mr. Bright.* 'Certainly, I would give you a measure which would make it impossible for the two Parliaments to come into conflict. There is the danger. If you get only a half-hearted measure, you will immediately ask for more. There would be renewed agitation—perhaps an attempt at insurrection—and in the end we should take away your Parliament, and probably make you a Crown colony.'

I said: 'Would you keep the Irish members in Westminster?'

*Mr. Bright.* 'Certainly not. Why, the best clause in Mr. Gladstone's Bill is the one which excludes them.'

'If you were a Home Ruler, Mr. Bright, you would, in fact, give Ireland Colonial Home Rule?'

*Mr. Bright.* 'I would give her a measure of Home Rule which should never bring her Parliament into close relation with the British Parliament. She should have control over everything which by the most liberal interpretation could be called Irish. I would either have trust

or distrust. If I had trust, I would trust to the full ; if I had distrust, I would do nothing. But this is a halting Bill. If you establish an Irish Parliament, give it plenty of work and plenty of responsibility. Throw the Irish upon themselves. Make them forget England ; let their energies be engaged in Irish party warfare ; but give no Irish party leader an opportunity of raising an anti-English cry. That is what a good Home Rule Bill ought to do. This Bill does not do it. Why, the Receiver-General appointed by it would alone keep alive the anti-English feeling. If you keep alive that feeling, what is the good of your Home Rule ? Mark, I am arguing this matter from your own point of view. But I do not think that Home Rule is necessary. Let us work on the old lines, but work more constantly and more vigorously. We have passed some good land laws. Well, let us pass more if necessary.'

I said : ' But will you ? '

*Mr. Bright.* ' I think so. I think that the English people are now thoroughly aroused to the necessities of Ireland : they are beginning to understand the country, and the old system of delay and injustice will not be renewed. If Mr. Parnell would only apply himself to the removal of the practical grievances of Ireland, there is no " concession," as you call it, which he could not get from the Imperial Parliament. I have said that I am not afraid that Home Rule would lead to separation. We are too strong for that. But I think that there are certain men in Ireland who would make an effort to obtain separation. I mean what you call the Old Fenians. I saw a letter from one of those men a few days ago—he does not know I saw it—a very long letter. I was much interested in it. I should like to

know what you are going to do with him. He is an upright, honourable man, ready, I can quite believe, to risk anything for his country. Now, he wants separation, and he wants to obtain it in regular warfare. He is mad, but a madman with a conscience is sometimes dangerous. I should think that he could appeal to the young men of the country, young fellows full of sentiment and enthusiasm—(a pause)—fools; but they might make themselves troublesome to your Irish Parliament. Now, what will you do with —? Will he be content with an Irish Parliament of any sort?’

‘Well, Mr. Bright, I am in a good position to answer that question. I saw — last night. I asked him if he would accept an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive which would have the fullest control of Irish affairs—the connection with England, of course, to be preserved.’

*Mr. Bright.* ‘Yes; and what did he say?’

‘He said: “I would take an oath of allegiance to an Irish Parliament; I will never take it to an English Parliament. I would enter an Irish Parliament; I would give it a fair trial——”’

*Mr. Bright.* ‘Well, you surprise me. This is certainly a new light. The man is quite honourable. He will do what he says. Well, but does your friend think that you will get a Home Rule Parliament?’

‘No; he thinks that we are living in a fool’s paradise, and that his turn will come again. Still, I fancy that he is somewhat astonished that an English Prime Minister should introduce any sort of Home Rule.’

*Mr. Bright.* ‘So am I. So far your Old Fenian and I agree.’



We then parted. As I left the club he said: 'Good-bye; I wish I was on your side. I have been on the Irish side all my life, and now at the end of my life I do not like even to appear to be against you; but I cannot vote for this Bill. I have not spoken against it. I do not know that I will speak against it, but (a pause) that is on account of Mr. Gladstone. My personal regard for him may prevent me from taking any part in the discussion.'

He said no more, and I came away. But his opposition to the Bill did not weaken the affectionate regard in which I had ever held him; nor do I cherish his memory the less now because he was not on the Irish side in the memorable struggle of twelve years ago. If he went wrong then, I cannot forget that for the best part of his public life Ireland had no stauncher friend in this country.

Two days after our conversation Mr. Bright declared publicly against Home Rule.

Writing to a friend in Birmingham on May 31 he said: 'My sympathy with Ireland, north and south, compels me to condemn the proposed legislation. I believe a united Parliament can and will be more just to all classes in Ireland than any Parliament that can meet in Dublin under the provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Bill. If Mr. Gladstone's great authority were withdrawn from these Bills,<sup>1</sup> I doubt if twenty persons outside the Irish party would support them. The more I consider them, the more I lament that they have been offered to Parliament and the country.'

While the debate on the second reading was proceeding rumours were afloat that the Government

<sup>1</sup> The Home Rule Bill and the Land Bill.

were ready to 'hang up' the Bill provided the second reading was carried. Parnell strongly opposed these tactics. In May he wrote to a member of the Cabinet saying that such a course could not be taken. The Government must show, he said, that they were in earnest in the business. To hang up the Bill would be to strengthen the position of the extreme men who did not want it, and to weaken the position of the moderate men who did. It would be difficult, he concluded, to persuade the people of Ireland if the Government dropped the Bill that they ever intended to take it up again. In fact, Parnell had got the Liberals into Home Rule, and he meant to pin them to it.

On June 7 the debate on the Home Rule Bill was brought to an end. Parnell reserved himself for that night. He then spoke in a moderate and conciliatory tone, warning the House, however, that the rejection of the Bill would lead to a renewal of turmoil in Ireland. He said: 'During the last five years I know, sir, that there have been very severe and drastic Coercion Bills, but it will require an even severer and more drastic measure of coercion now. You will require all that you have had during the last five years, and more besides. What, sir, has that coercion been? You have had, sir, during those five years—I don't say this to inflame passion—you have had during those five years the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; you have had a thousand of your Irish fellow-subjects held in prison without specific charge, many of them for long periods of time, some of them for twenty months, without trial, and without any intention of placing them upon trial (I think of all these thousand persons arrested under the Coercion Act of the late Mr. Forster scarcely a dozen were put on their trial); you

have had the Arms Act ; you have had the suspension of trial by jury—all during the last five years. You have authorised your police to enter the domicile of a citizen, of your fellow-subject in Ireland, at any hour of the day or night, and search any part of this domicile, even the beds of the women, without warrant. You have fined the innocent for offences committed by the guilty ; you have taken power to expel aliens from the country ; you have revived the curfew law and the blood money of your Norman conquerors ; you have gagged the Press, and seized and suppressed newspapers ; you have manufactured new crimes and offences, and applied fresh penalties unknown to your law for these crimes and offences. All this you have done for five years, and all this and much more you will have to do again.

‘The provision in the Bill for excluding the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament has been very vehemently objected to, and Mr. Trevelyan has said that there is no half-way house between separation and the maintenance of law and order in Ireland by Imperial authority. I say, with just as much sincerity of belief and just as much experience as the right hon. gentleman, that in my judgment there is no half-way house between the concession of legislative autonomy to Ireland and the disfranchisement of the country, and her Government as a Crown colony. But, sir, I refuse to believe that these evil days must come. I am convinced there are a sufficient number of wise and just members in this House to cause it to disregard appeals made to passion, and to choose the better way of founding peace and goodwill among nations ; and when the numbers in the division lobby come to be told, it will also be told for the admiration

of all future generations that England and her Parliament, in this nineteenth century, were wise enough, brave enough, and generous enough to close the strife of centuries, and to give peace and prosperity to suffering Ireland.'

'England and her Parliament' were not 'wise enough,' 'brave enough,' or 'generous enough' to close the 'strife of centuries' by accepting Mr. Gladstone's Bill. It was rejected in a full House by 343 to 313 votes. A Dissolution immediately followed, and in July the three kingdoms were once more in the whirl of a general election. In December 1885 the Liberals had gone to the country denouncing Parnell and the Irish. In July 1886 they went to the country in alliance with Parnell and the Irish. This extraordinary revolution was due to the genius and character of a single man—Mr. Gladstone. Liberals indeed there were—a mere handful—who had given in their adhesion to Home Rule before the conversion of Mr. Gladstone, but the bulk of the Liberal party had yielded to the personal influence and authority of the Liberal leader. Parnell had conquered Mr. Gladstone; Mr. Gladstone conquered the Liberal party.

While the election was pending it occurred to me that in the changed condition of affairs some effort ought to be made to educate the English constituencies. One day Mr. George Meredith had said to me: 'Why is not something done to inform the public mind on Home Rule? I admit the necessity of agitation, but you want something besides. Having blazed on the English lines with the artillery of agitation, you ought now to charge them with the cavalry of facts.' I made my proposal first to Mr. Davitt. He cordially accepted it: 'Parnell,' he said, 'has neglected the English democracy.'

I have been at him again and again to do what you now propose, but he would not listen to me. We have friends in this country, and we must help them to help us. I will see Parnell this evening, and do you call upon him to-morrow. He has plenty of money, and he ought to spend some in this way.'

I saw Parnell next day in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons. He looked ill and depressed. I was surprised. There was assuredly, I thought, much to cheer him. The Home Rule Bill had no doubt been rejected. But he had in ten short years done more for the cause of Irish legislative independence than all his predecessors had done in eighty years. He was a victor even in defeat. Still, he looked anything but cheerful, and as we talked he gazed thoughtfully through the window out on the Thames, and his mind seemed to be far away from the stirring scenes around us. 'Yes,' he said, 'Davitt has spoken to me about your plan. He thinks it a very good thing. You propose to form a committee and publish pamphlets. Who are your committee?' I gave him the names. 'Very well,' he said, 'I will try the experiment. I don't believe it will do the good Davitt expects, but I am willing to try it to please him. How much money do you want?' I named a sum. 'I will give you half,' he said. Then, smiling—'I cut down every demand by half. Half is quite enough for an experiment. If it succeeds, then we can do the business on a larger scale. I admit that as Mr. Gladstone has joined us we must have some change of policy. But we cannot persuade the English people. They will only do what we force them to do.' I said: 'Mr. Gladstone can persuade them.' 'Yes,' he answered, 'they will listen to an Englishman. They won't listen to us.'

As I was leaving he said—and the remark showed his thoughtfulness—‘I don’t want you to be out of pocket in this matter. I will give you the money when you write for it,’ which he did promptly.

During the election Parnell addressed meetings at Plymouth and at other places in Great Britain. ‘While in the West of England,’ says Sir Robert Edgcumbe, ‘he stopped with me at Totnes. He said he had, as a boy, lived at Torquay, and that he should much like to revisit it. He drove over to Torquay between lunch and dinner, and when he returned he told me, with some regret, that he had been unable to identify the house in which he had lived. Torquay, too, did not seem to come up to his boyish recollections. For myself, I can honestly say that of all the men I have ever met, Mr. Cecil Rhodes alone equals Mr. Parnell in possessing that peculiarly indefinable quality, the power to lead men—that rare power which induces people to lay aside their own judgment altogether and to place implicit reliance, absolute and unquestioning, in the guidance of another.’

The elections were over before the end of July.

*Result.*

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Tories . . . . .               | 316 |
| Dissentient Liberals . . . . . | 78  |
| Unionist total . . . . .       | 394 |
| Liberals . . . . .             | 191 |
| Irish Nationalists . . . . .   | 85  |
| Home Rule total . . . . .      | 276 |

Unionist majority, 118

Mr. Gladstone resigned before the final returns were sent in, and when Parliament met on August 5 Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Londonderry, Viceroy. The second great Home Rule battle had been fought and lost.

Parnell was standing one day in the Lobby after the General Election; Mr. Chamberlain passed. 'There goes the man,' said Parnell, 'who killed the Home Rule Bill.'

The Irish leader thought that Mr. Gladstone had committed a tactical mistake in mixing up land purchase with the question of an Irish Parliament. He had a conversation with Davitt on this subject while Home Rule still hung in the balance.

*Parnell.* 'The Home Rule Bill will be wrecked by the land purchase scheme. I think it would be better to drop the land scheme altogether.'

*Davitt.* 'Drop the land — ! Why, it is vital.'

*Parnell.* 'I don't think so; furthermore, I think that if we had a Parliament in Ireland it would be wiser to drop the land question.'

*Davitt.* 'Drop the land question! How on earth could you drop the land question after all we have done during the last seven years?'

*Parnell.* 'Oh! I don't mean that there shall be no land legislation. There might be an amendment of the Act of 1881 and of the Act of 1885. We should proceed slowly. But there should be no revolutionary changes. No attack upon the land system as a whole.'

*Davitt.* 'Mr. Parnell! how on earth could you resist attacking the land system, as a whole, after all

your speeches? If you were Irish Secretary in an Irish Parliament, how could you defend yourself in the face of these speeches. What would you do?’

*Parnell.* ‘The first thing I should do would be to lock you up.’



## CHAPTER XX

## THE NEW PARLIAMENT

ONE of Parnell's first acts in the new Parliament, despite his desire to concentrate his efforts on the national question, was the introduction of a Land Bill. The Irish tenants, he said, could not pay the judicial rents. There had been a serious fall in prices, and there ought to be a proportionate reduction in rent.

He proposed three things :

'1. The abatement of rents fixed before 1885, provided it could be proved that the tenants were unable to pay the full amount, and were ready to pay half the amount and arrears.

'2. That leaseholders should be admitted to the benefits of the Act of 1881.

'3. That proceedings for the recovery of rent should be suspended on payment of half the rent and arrears.'

But the Government would not hear of the Bill ; even many Liberals doubted its necessity ; and it was rejected (September 21) by 297 to 202 votes.

Two months afterwards Parnell fell seriously ill. On November 6 he called on Sir Henry Thompson, who has kindly given me some account of the visit. 'Parnell,' said Sir Henry, 'first called on me on November 6, 1886. He did not give his own name. He gave the name of Charles Stewart. Of course I

had often heard of Parnell, but I had never seen him. I had never even seen a photograph of him. When he called he was quite a stranger to me.' (Then, abruptly) : 'Was Parnell an Irishman?' I replied, 'Yes.' 'I should never have thought it,' resumed Sir Henry; 'he had none of the characteristics of an Irishman. He was cold, reserved, uncommunicative. An Irishman is not uncommunicative. Start him on any subject (with a smile), and he will rattle along pleasantly on many subjects. But Parnell was, I should say, a very silent man. He answered every question I asked him fully and clearly, but he never volunteered information. Often a man will wander from the subject, and feel disposed to be chatty. Parnell kept to the point. He never went outside the business of our interview. He was anxious and nervous about himself, and listened very attentively to my directions. I gave him some directions about diet, as I do to all my patients. He said there was a lady with him in the next room, and that he would be glad if I would give the directions to her. The lady then came in. I really don't remember how Parnell described her. I gave her the directions about dietary. She seemed to be very anxious, and listened carefully. I saw Parnell several times afterwards. Our interviews were always of a strictly professional character. Of course I finally learned who my patient was, and then I put his full name on my books. There it is—Charles Stewart Parnell. He did not strike me as a remarkable man. He said nothing which made any impression on me. I should have taken him, and did take him, for a quiet, modest, dignified, English country gentleman.' The lady who accompanied Parnell to Sir Henry Thompson's was Mrs. O'Shea.

Mrs. O'Shea was the wife of Captain O'Shea, who had practically acted as Mr. Chamberlain's ambassador in negotiating the Kilmainham treaty, and who subsequently became member for Galway.<sup>1</sup> During the General Election of 1880 Captain O'Shea (then a successful candidate for the representation of the County Clare) was introduced to Parnell by The O'Gorman Mahon. Some weeks afterwards Parnell met Mrs. O'Shea for the first time at a dinner party given by her husband at Thomas's Hotel, in Berkeley Square. A friendship, which soon ripened into love, sprang up between them, and from 1881 to 1891 they lived as husband and wife.

The O'Sheas had a house at Eltham. Parnell took quarters near them. Captain O'Shea's suspicions of improper intimacy between Parnell and his wife were aroused so early as 1881.

Coming to Eltham one day—he had chambers in town, where he generally stopped—he found Parnell's portmanteau in the house. He at once flew into a rage with his wife, and sent a challenge to Parnell.

### *Captain O'Shea to Parnell*

'Salisbury Hotel, St. James's: July 13, 1881.

'SIR,—Will you please be so kind as to be at Lille, or at any other town in the north of France which may

<sup>1</sup> 'It seems to me,' I said to Mr. Healy, 'that O'Shea was Chamberlain's ambassador in negotiating the Kilmainham treaty.' 'Certainly,' he replied. 'O'Shea and Chamberlain were very intimate. It was O'Shea who brought me to Chamberlain's house and introduced me to him.' It may be stated that Captain O'Shea followed Mr. Chamberlain rather than Parnell at the parting of the ways over the Home Rule Bill in 1886. He did not vote on the second reading—'he walked out.' Soon afterwards he resigned his seat for Galway and disappeared from political life.

suit your convenience, on Saturday morning, 16th instant. Please let me know by 1 P.M. to-day, so that I may be able to inform you as to the sign of the inn at which I shall stay. I want your answer, in order to lose no time in arranging for a friend to accompany me.'

Captain O'Shea did not receive an immediate answer to this letter, whereupon he wrote again :

'I find that you have not gone abroad ; your luggage is at Charing Cross Station.'

Returning from Eltham, he brought Parnell's portmanteau with him to Charing Cross.

Parnell replied :

*Parnell to Captain O'Shea*

'Westminster Palace Hotel : July 14, 1881.

'SIR,—I had your letter of yesterday, bearing the postmark of to-day. I replied to your previous letter yesterday morning, and sent my reply by a careful messenger to the Salisbury Club. You will find that your surmise that I refuse to go abroad is an incorrect one.'

But there was no duel. Mrs. O'Shea satisfied the Captain that there was nothing wrong, and friendly relations were at once resumed between him and Parnell.

I do not think that it is any part of my duty as Parnell's biographer to enter into the details of his *liaison* with Mrs. O'Shea. I have only to deal with the subject as it affects his public career, and when I have stated that he lived maritally with Mrs. O'Shea I feel that I have done all that may reasonably be expected of me.

I am not going to excuse Parnell, neither shall I sit in judgment on him. He sinned, and he paid the penalty of his sin. For ten years this unfortunate *liaison* hung like a millstone round his neck, and dragged him in the end to the grave. There it lies buried. I shall not root it up.

It has been said—and this is a topic with which I am bound to deal—that Parnell neglected Ireland for Mrs. O'Shea.

I will try to deal with this charge fairly and, I hope, dispassionately, limiting the inquiry at present to the point at which the narrative has now arrived. It is not suggested that Parnell neglected Ireland in 1881 or in 1882 up to the date of his arrest; neither is it suggested that he neglected Ireland from January 1885 until the fall of the Gladstone Ministry in June 1886. The charge, then, covers the period between May 1882 and December 1884.

During this period Parnell did not certainly act with his wonted energy in Irish affairs.

The question is—

1. What were the causes of his comparative inactivity?

2. Did that inactivity amount to neglect of duty, and, if so, to what extent?

1. Many causes conspired to make Parnell inactive between May 1882 and December 1884, and among those causes I am free to say that his entanglement with Mrs. O'Shea must be counted. She threw a spell over him which changed the current of his domestic life and affected the course of his political career. In the old days he was glad to come to Avondale, glad to be among his own people, happy in the company of his sisters, bound up with every family interest.

'Charley,' says John, 'was very fond of Avondale. He used to be here often all alone, but he never minded it. He went about among the people, was always doing something on the property, looking after his mines, and quite happy. He would go on to Anghavanagh to shoot; then some of my sisters would come and stop with him, and he would go out walking or riding and living a pleasant life. Then we noticed a change. He did not come so frequently to Avondale. He spent more time in England.' The rest and solace which he had once found in the old home in the beautiful Wicklow vale he now sought in the new retreat of a London suburb. He loved Mrs. O'Shea, and it would be idle to deny that this passion exercised a distracting and absorbing influence upon him. There were weeks, months, which he would have spent in Ireland, to the immense advantage of the National movement, but for his unfortunate attachment to that unhappy lady. All this I admit frankly and fully. But be it remembered that Mrs. O'Shea was only one of the factors in the case—only one of the causes which conspired to his comparative inactivity during the years under review.

What were the others? Health and public policy. First as to health. There can be no doubt that Parnell's health was impaired during the years '82-84, and his nervous system unstrung.

One evening in 1883 he came into the Dining-room of the House of Commons. He had been at a private meeting, attended by some of his parliamentary colleagues, and by other Nationalists who were not in Parliament. He looked jaded, careworn, ill. Mr. Corbet, one of the members for Wicklow, was dining at a table by himself.

'On coming into the room,' says Mr. Corbet,

‘Parnell looked around, and his quick eye soon picked me out. He walked across to my table, and said, “May I dine with you, Corbet?” “My dear Parnell,” I replied, “I am only delighted to have you with me.” He looked worried, ill, broken down. “Parnell,” I said, “is there anything wrong? You look upset.” “No,” he replied, “I am not very well just now, and things unnerve me. I shall be all right when I have had some dinner.” I said, “Parnell, will you let an old friend and neighbour take a liberty with you?” “Certainly, Corbet,” he answered; “what is it?”

“You are not well,” I said; “you look tired and worn out. For heaven’s sake, fling up everything and go away. The Government cannot do us much harm if you go away for a few months; do take a complete rest. Suppose you break down altogether, what will happen then?” “Oh, I won’t break down,” he said, quickly pulling himself together; “I’ll be all right soon.” “But,” I urged, “why not go away even for two months? Two months’ complete rest, free from all anxiety, would set you up at once.” “I cannot go away,” he said wearily. “I am not afraid of the Government; they can’t do us much harm for a few months, as you say, and I am not going to fight them just at present. I am thinking of our own party. I cannot leave them. I must keep my eye on them and hold them together. But” (brightening up) “I mean to rest, Corbet, I mean to take it easy for a bit. But I cannot go away.” Afterwards I heard that he had had an unpleasant meeting—that the men were all at sixes and sevens, and that he had a good deal of trouble in smoothing over difficulties and in making peace. He was always smoothing over difficulties, making peace, and holding us together.’

I do not wish to press this point of health unduly. I desire only to remind my readers that it was a factor in the case. But the dominating factor was, I believe, public policy.

While Parnell was in prison every turbulent spirit in the country had been let loose. The accounts from the west filled him with alarm. Ireland was passing out of his hands, and into the hands of an irresponsible *jacquerie*. His first thought was to leave jail, to crush the *jacquerie*, and to stamp his own authority once more upon the people. He made the Kilmainham treaty, the terms of which, as I have already said, were: (1) that an Arrears Bill should be introduced, (2) that he should slow down the agitation. The Kilmainham treaty might have been wise or unwise. Mr. Healy, the shrewdest man in Irish politics, thought it was wise.

But wise or unwise, Parnell, having made it, was resolved to keep it. 'We have always,' one of the Liberal whips said to me, 'found it difficult to pin Parnell to anything. But when he has made a promise we find that he keeps his word.' Within a few days of his release the Phoenix Park murders were committed. This outrage literally prostrated him. Davitt's description of his appearance and conduct at the Westminster Palace Hotel on Sunday, May 7, 1882, gives one the idea of a man who had gone mad under a shock. He walked frantically up and down the room, flung himself passionately on the sofa, and petulantly cried out: 'I will leave public life. I will not have the responsibility of leading this agitation when I may at any time be stabbed in the back by irresponsible men.' He had lost his habitual self-control. He was completely unnerved.



In favour of peace before the Phoenix Park murders, he was a thousand times more bent upon it afterwards. He was more than ever convinced that Ireland needed a period of repose, and he made up his mind that she should have it. Three causes, then, conspired to make Parnell inactive—public policy, health, and Mrs. O'Shea.

2. I now pass to the next point. Did Parnell's inactivity amount to neglect of duty, and, if so, to what extent?

Having made up his mind to adopt a policy of inactivity, it goes without saying that he himself was bound to be inactive. To have addressed public meetings, to have roused the country, to have inflamed the people, would have been contrary to his aims and a violation of the Kilmainham treaty. His first duty was to keep that treaty, and to see that the Government kept it.

The Government passed an Arrears Bill, and so far kept faith. No doubt they also passed the Crimes Bill, which was practically a violation of the treaty. But the hands of Ministers had been forced by the Phoenix Park murders. Had there been no murders there would have been no Crimes Act.

In the autumn Mr. Davitt proposed the formation of the National League. Parnell was opposed to the project, for the obvious reason that this move meant fresh agitation, which he did not want. Ultimately he gave way, taking care, however, to superintend the establishment of the new organisation and to thwart the plans of the 'active' men. He did not allow Mr. Davitt to thrust a scheme for nationalisation upon the country; he told Mr. Dillon that the agitation should be 'slowed down,' he bridled Brennan. Finally all three left the country.

The years 1883 and 1884 were dynamite years, and the dynamite epidemic, like the Phoenix Park murders, served only to strengthen his determination to keep Ireland quiet. I have already shown how, wherever his authority was questioned, whenever there was the least sign of a division in the ranks, he appeared in an instant on the spot, to restore order and crush revolt. During these two years and a half he was, if I may say so, active—though probably not active enough—in enforcing a policy of inactivity. At length in January 1885, when, in his opinion, the time for a renewal of hostilities had arrived, he burst brilliantly upon the scene, and splendidly led his men to victory.

To sum up :

1. Parnell was comparatively inactive between 1882 and 1884, chiefly on public grounds, and partly owing to ill-health and to his entanglement with Mrs. O'Shea.

2. His inactivity did not in the main amount to neglect of duty—he never failed in any crisis—though he was frequently absent from Ireland and from the House of Commons when his presence might have been of advantage to the national cause. So far I have dealt with the charge of negligence during the years 1882 and 1884 brought against Parnell. I shall now resume the narrative, and my readers can judge for themselves of his political conduct between 1886 and 1891.

Parnell warned the Government that if the Land Bill were rejected there would be a renewal of turmoil in Ireland. His words were justified by events. In December 1886 the famous Plan of Campaign was launched, and another agrarian war broke out. 'Who

was the author of the Plan of Campaign ?' I asked one behind the scenes. He answered : ' William O'Brien. It came about in this way. Parnell really desired peace. He was ill for one thing,<sup>1</sup> for another he wanted to reconsider the whole situation. Gladstone was converted to Home Rule. We now had friends in England. A new condition of things had arisen. How was it to be dealt with ? That was one of the problems which Parnell had to face, and he was anxious for breathing-time to look round.

' His Land Bill would have secured peace by preventing the exaction of impossible rents. But the Government would not have it. They soon found out their mistake. They desired peace too. They were anxious to govern without coercion. They wished to be in a position to say : " The Home Rule Bill has been rejected, but Ireland is perfectly quiet. The Liberals could not rule by the ordinary law ; we can. Ireland is contented." The excellent intentions of the Government were baffled by their own friends. As the autumn approached the landlords demanded their rents. The tenants asked for reductions. The landlords refused. The tenants held out. Writs of eviction were issued, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach suddenly saw his hopes of a peaceful Ireland gravely jeopardised. He appealed to the landlords not to insist on their " rights." Sir Redvers Buller, who had been sent to the south on some special mission, supported the Chief Secretary in his efforts to stay the hand of the evictor. But the landlords were implacable. It was at this stage that William O'Brien proposed to take action. The efforts of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to keep the landlords in check were the talk of the

<sup>1</sup> ' Sick unto death ' is Mr. Healy's expression.

country. O'Brien argued that if these efforts succeeded the Liberals would be dished, agitation prevented, and reform staved off. The tenants, he said, should not be allowed to wait the result of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's operations. They should themselves take the initiative. His original idea was that if the landlords persisted in refusing reductions the tenants should refuse to pay. Funds were to be provided to enable them to stand out, one-third of the money being provided by the local men and two-thirds by the League in Dublin.

'O'Brien tried, in the first instance, to see Parnell and to place the plan before him. But Parnell could not be seen. He was, as I have said, very ill, and nobody could approach him. O'Brien then saw Dillon, who took up the scheme at once. In nine cases out of ten O'Brien was able to lead Dillon. Both of them finally came to me. I proposed an amendment in the original scheme to the effect that the tenant should offer a fair rent; that if the landlords refused it, the money should be banked and the tenant should sit tight. This amendment was accepted and became the basis of the plan. In every district a managing committee was to be elected. The rent was to be banked with the committee, and the committee was to deal with the landlords. If the landlords refused to come to terms, the money should be used to support the tenants in cases of ejectment or sale, and to fight the landlords generally. That roughly was the principle of the Plan of Campaign. There were details dealing with the question of machinery, but I don't think you need trouble about them.'

'Was Parnell,' I asked, 'in favour of the Plan of Campaign?'

'Dead against it,' my friend answered. 'As I

have said, he wanted peace. He wanted time to turn round. In addition, he was altogether against a revival of a land agitation on a large scale. He would not go back to 1879, 1880, 1881. Of course he did not forget the land question. He had brought in his Bill of 1886, and he meant to bring it in again. But he was against setting the country again in a blaze on the land question. He was really thinking more of the national question at this time, and meant to keep the movement on national as opposed to agrarian lines.'

Some time towards the end of 1886 or early in 1887 I met Mr. Campbell, Parnell's secretary, near Charing Cross. The Plan of Campaign had by this time been published in 'United Ireland' and was put in force in the west. Everyone was talking about it. 'Is the Chief in favour of the Plan of Campaign?' I asked Mr. Campbell. He answered, with characteristic Ulster caution: 'I really can't say. I have not seen him for some time. He is very ill. I don't think he has been consulted by these gentlemen.' A short time after this conversation the following circular was issued from the London offices of the Irish parliamentary party: 'Mr. Parnell does not propose to express any opinion as to the "Plan of Campaign" at present, as he is desirous of first going to Ireland and having an opportunity of consulting with the gentlemen responsible for its organisation and working, whom he has not seen since the close of last session. He also wishes for further information than that at present in his possession with regard to various matters before he speaks publicly on the subject. Mr. Parnell was not aware that the Plan of Campaign had been devised or was going to be proposed until he saw it in the newspapers.'

The Plan of Campaign constituted a serious drain

on the financial resources of the League, but kept the ball of agitation rolling. The turmoil which Parnell had anticipated was renewed, the Government were forced to abandon all hope of governing by the ordinary law, a perpetual Coercion Bill<sup>1</sup> was added to the statute-book, and Ministers and agitators stood face to face in a fierce and protracted struggle.

The 'war' lasted throughout the years 1887, 1888, and 1889, and was attended by the usual 'incidents.' Public meetings were suppressed, whole districts proclaimed, popular representatives were flung into jail, juries packed (when, indeed, there was trial by jury at all). Evictions were multiplied, peasants and police were brought into collision, and the old feeling of hatred and distrust between rulers and ruled was kept painfully alive.

Ireland was once more a prey to lawlessness upon one side and to arbitrary authority on the other. Eighty-seven years of union still found the island distracted, disloyal, and impoverished.

We have seen that the Government had rejected Parnell's Land Bill of 1886; had refused (1) to admit leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act of 1881,

<sup>1</sup> The most important provisions of the Crimes Act were: (1) That when a crime was committed an inquiry upon oath might take place, though no one was in custody charged with committing the crime. (2) That trial by jury might be suspended, and trial by magistrate substituted, in the following cases: (a) taking part in any criminal conspiracy now punishable by law; (b) using violence and intimidation; (c) riot and unlawful assembly; (d) forcibly seizing premises from which a tenant had been evicted; (e) interfering with the officers of the law in discharge of their duties; (f) inciting to any of these offences. The Lord Lieutenant was given power to proclaim disturbed districts and dangerous associations. The right of appeal was given where the sentence was over a month. In March Sir Michael Hicks-Beach retired from the office of Irish Secretary. He was succeeded by Mr. Arthur Balfour. It may be stated that early in the session of 1887 the closure, by a bare majority and on the motion of any member (provided the consent of the Chair was given to the motion and 200 members voted for it), was adopted.

(2) to revise the judicial rents prior to 1885. 'I am not at all sure,' Lord Salisbury had said in August 1886, 'that the judicial rents were not fixed with a perfect cognisance of the fall in prices; <sup>1</sup> the fall has been going on for many years, and it is highly improbable that the courts, in assigning judicial rents, have not taken that into consideration. . . . We do not contemplate any revision of judicial rents. We do not think it would be honest, and we think it would be exceedingly inexpedient.' Nevertheless Lord Salisbury did in 1887 the precise thing which he had declared in 1886 it would not be 'honest' or 'expedient' to do. He carried a Land Bill admitting leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act of 1881, and authorising the revision of the judicial rents fixed during the years 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, and 1885. Parnell sat quietly in the House of Commons and looked cynically on while this measure, supported by the full strength of the Tory party, passed, practically without opposition, into law.

A close alliance was now formed between Irish Nationalists and English Liberals, and the Home Rule cause entered on a new phase. Irish members who twelve months before had been regarded as pariahs were now welcomed on Liberal platforms and fêted in Liberal drawing-rooms.

The whilom rebels of the Land League (once described as ready to 'march through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire') had suddenly become political lions and social pets. A Liberal candidate would scarcely think of beginning an election contest without having a brace of Irishmen by his side. 'Send

<sup>1</sup> 'In 1886 the price of produce had fallen from 80 to 40 per cent., and the judicial rents fixed during the four preceding years, when prices had been higher, became in consequence rack rents.'—*Annual Register*, 1888.

us an Irish member' was the stereotyped order despatched periodically by the provincial Liberal associations to the Irish Press agency in London. Irishmen who had been in jail were in special request. Irish members swarmed in the English constituencies, preaching 'peace and goodwill.' Liberals overran Ireland, sympathising with the victims of the Castle, and glorying in the heroes of the Plan of Campaign.

I met no English Liberal at this period who doubted the loyal professions of the Irish Parliamentarians. I met many Liberals who doubted the loyal professions of Parnell. They believed that every Irish member was willing to accept a settlement of the Irish question on the basis of a 'subordinate' Parliament. But they did not know what was at the back of Parnell's mind. 'Outwardly he is much changed,' an English Liberal said to me, 'but I suspect in his heart he hates us as much as ever.' It would be a bold man who would at any time say positively what was at the back of Parnell's mind, or in the recesses of his heart; but this much is certain—he was never moved, as other Irish members were moved, by the apparent zeal with which the Liberal party, spurred by Mr. Gladstone, had taken up the cause of Ireland.

'Parnell was staying with me in Cork, in 1887,' says Mr. Horgan. 'We were all at that time full of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. Almost every Nationalist in the city had a portrait of Mr. Gladstone in his house. The old man was nearly as popular as the young Chief. But Parnell remained unaffected by the general enthusiasm. While he was with me he never spoke of Mr. Gladstone or the Liberals. I thought this strange, so one evening I said to him: "Mr. Parnell, everyone in Cork is talking about Mr.



Gladstone except you. I would like to know what you think of him, now." "I think," he answered frigidly, "of Mr. Gladstone and the English people what I have always thought of them. They will do, what we can make them do."

The Irish members were, as a rule, eager to go on Liberal platforms, and pleased with the social attentions showered upon them. All these things, they thought, were making for Home Rule. They had implicit faith in the Liberals, and cultivated the friendliest relations with their new allies. But Parnell stood apart. He disliked going on English platforms, and shunned English society. He believed only in his own strength. He did not object to let his followers use 'kid gloves.' His reliance was always on the 'mailed hand,' soft though the covering in which it might be encased. 'I do not object,' he said to me in later years, 'to an English alliance which we can control; I object to an English alliance which the English control.'

The Irish member whom Liberals most desired to see on English platforms was the one who most disliked to come—Parnell. A distinguished Liberal asked the Irish whip if Parnell would address a meeting of his constituents. The whip saw the Chief, who, after some persuasion, consented to attend. There was a great gathering. Pains were taken to give the Irish leader a worthy reception. He never came. The distinguished Liberal complained to the Irish whip of this treatment. The whip reported the matter to Parnell.

'Ah!' said the Chief, 'you ought to have sent me a telegram on the morning of the meeting. I forgot all about it. Let them call another meeting and I will attend.'

Another meeting was called. Parnell attended, and never, even in Ireland, did he receive a more hearty welcome. One of the most charming leaders of society invited him to dinner. He did not answer the invitation, and he did not come to the dinner. A week afterwards Lady — received a telegram from him saying he would dine with her the following evening; she, however, was engaged to dine out. What was to be done? for the chance of meeting Parnell was not to be lightly thrown away. With a woman's wit and resource she got over the difficulty by inviting her hostess to have the dinner party at *her* house. Parnell came. In the course of the evening Lady — said: 'We are very pleased to have you with us, Mr. Parnell, but this is not the evening we asked you for.' How is that?' he said. 'I wrote to you to the House of Commons inviting you for last Wednesday.' 'Ah!' he said, 'never write to me; always wire to me.'

An ex-Cabinet Minister had invited him to dine. He did not answer the letter, and he did not come to dinner. A month later the ex-Minister met him in the Lobby and reminded him of the invitation. 'I never got your letter,' said Parnell. The ex-Minister mentioned the date. 'I expect,' said Parnell, 'it is lying on the table amongst a heap of letters I have not yet opened.'

A great Liberal meeting was held at St. James's Hall. Mr. Morley presided. Parnell was invited, and he accepted the invitation. The managers of the meeting, however, did not feel sure of him. First, they thought it extremely doubtful that he would come. Secondly, they were a little uneasy as to what he would say if he did come. All the other Irish members could be relied on to make orthodox Liberal speeches.

But what Parnell might say no man could forecast. It was finally arranged that Mr. Morley should meet Parnell at a given point, should drive him to St. James's Hall, and generally take care of him. They dined together, and then drove to the meeting. On the way Parnell suddenly thrust his hand into his coat pocket, and took out a little box wrapped in paper. Mr. Morley's attention was diverted. He knew something about Parnell's superstitions, and probably suspected that this was a charm. Parnell treated the box with great care, unfolded the paper, opened it gingerly, and took out—a flower, which he immediately put in his buttonhole. By the time this operation was over the carriage stopped at St. James's Hall. Mr. Morley and Parnell alighted. The Chief had not spoken a word about politics, nor indeed about anything else, during the drive.

'I was at the meeting,' says Mr. Frederic Harrison, 'and sat next Parnell. I was much struck by his appearance when he spoke. He had one hand behind his back, which he kept closing and opening spasmodically all the time. It was curious to watch the signs of nervous excitement and tension which one saw looking from the back, while in front he stood like a soldier on duty, frigid, impassive, resolute—not a trace of nervousness or emotion. He did not seem to care about putting himself in touch with his audience. He came to say something, and said it with apparent indifference to his surroundings.' On leaving the hall a crowd closed around him, everyone eager to get near, and many struggling to grasp his hand. It was only by the help of some friends that he was extricated from the throng and led to a carriage, in which he drove away.

‘He will soon set the English as mad as the Irish,’ observed a bystander, as an enthusiastic cheer broke from the mob.

Throughout the years 1887, 1888, and 1889 Parnell remained comparatively inactive, as he had remained throughout the years 1883, 1884, and part of 1885, and for the same reasons—public policy, health, and Mrs. O’Shea. His health seems to have been in a precarious state all the time. He appeared to me during the latter years to be lethargic and morbidly nervous.

One evening I sat with him in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons. ‘This place,’ he said, ‘is killing me. There are draughts everywhere. There is a draught now under this seat, I feel it on my legs. It is a badly constructed building.’ One used to see him occasionally in the streets closely wrapped up in a long coat, with a muffler round his throat and his hat pulled tightly over his eyes.

‘Parnell liked to go about partly disguised,’ says a parliamentary colleague. ‘He did not like people to talk to him in the streets. He did not wish to be recognised. One day I met him in the street so wrapped up, and wearing a long shabby coat, with his face half hidden in a big muffler, that I hardly knew him. But his firm, stately bearing could not be mistaken. I kept out of his way, but watched him as he walked along, following him at a respectful distance. He would stop now and then, and look into the window of a gun shop, or of a shop where there were mechanical contrivances. He would also stand and look at any workmen who were about. He came to a part of the Strand where the street was taken up, and a lot of workmen were engaged. I should say he stood there for

quite fifteen minutes watching the men. I stood there, too, keeping out of his sight. Suddenly he wheeled around and saw me. I was quite in a funk, for I was afraid that he knew I had been following him all the time. He beckoned to me. I went to him. "You are here too," he said. "I like looking at these working men. A working man has a pleasant life, when he has plenty to do and is fairly treated." We then walked together to the House.'

Parnell was walking another day along the Strand, with, I think, his secretary, Mr. Campbell. An Irish member passed and saluted the Chief. 'Who is that?' asked Parnell. 'Why, don't you know?' said his companion; 'it is one of our party, it is Mr. —.' 'Ah!' said Parnell, 'I did not know we had such an ugly man in the party.'

He was frequently absent from the House of Commons in those years. 'It must have been very awkward for Parnell's people to have him away so often,' one of the Liberal whips said to me. 'And yet,' he added quickly, 'I am not sure that his very absence does not add to his authority. They (the Irish members) know he is there, and that he may appear at any moment; that knowledge keeps them in order.' 'And,' I ventured to observe, 'keeps other people in order too.' 'Perhaps,' he said, with a smile.

One afternoon Parnell dropped into the House. He sat near the Irish whip. 'If the House divides now,' he said, 'the Government will be beaten.' 'Impossible,' said the whip; 'think of their majority.' 'There are more Liberals than Tories in the House at the present moment,' quietly responded Parnell. 'How do you know?' asked the whip. 'I counted the

coats as I came up,' was the answer. The House did divide, not immediately, as Parnell had suggested, but at the end of an hour, when the Government narrowly escaped defeat.

When we speak of Parnell's comparative inactivity, we must never forget that—rightly or wrongly—he was at this period in favour of an inactive policy. 'We can be more moderate,' he had said in September 1886, 'than we were in 1879 or in 1880, because our position is very much stronger. I don't say that we should be unduly moderate, but our position is a good deal different from the position of 1874 and from the position of 1879, and I believe that the Irish members and the Irish people will recognise this.'

Though attending few public meetings, he kept his eye on business details and watched and influenced the progress of affairs. In January 1888 we find him writing to Dr. Kenny:

*Parnell to Dr. Kenny*

January 19, '88, House of Commons.

'MY DEAR DR. KENNY,—The party are making great exertions to secure a full attendance of their members for the divisions on the Local Government Bill. An important division will probably be taken at the morning sitting on Friday next, and another on Scotch Disestablishment at the evening sitting on the same day. I am very unwilling to ask you to come over, but I think I ought now to do so, and I hope that you will be able to stay for ten days or a fortnight.

'Yours very truly,

'CHARLES STEWART PARNEILL.'



forward,' and the vacant place was ultimately filled by another.

Of course the Irish supported the Liberal candidates everywhere in those days. Upon one occasion an Irish member, O., who had a personal quarrel over some business matters with a Liberal candidate, called at the Irish Press agency, saw the gentlemen in charge of the department (whom I shall call A. and B. respectively), and said: 'Don't send any member to support K. (the Liberal candidate); 'the fellow is not worth it.'

'When,' says B., 'O. left, I said to my colleague: "I think we ought to tell this to the Chief. He won't like to have the agency used for O.'s purposes." The next evening I told the Chief as we were walking up and down the corridor leading from the Lobby to the Library. Parnell turned round sharply, his eyes flashing with anger, and said: "Where is O.?" "In the Lobby," I answered. "Send him to me at once." I went into the Lobby and told O. that Parnell wanted to see him. He walked off with a light and jaunty step. I could not resist the temptation of watching the interview through the glass door leading out of the Lobby.

'Parnell turned sharply on O. as he came up. Then they walked up and down the corridor. Parnell seemed to be speaking with much vehemence. His face was as black as thunder, and his eyes gleamed with passion. I could see him stretching out his hand, clenching his fist, and turning fiercely on O. Then he shook his head, pointed to the Library, and walked off to the Lobby, leaving O. alone in the passage. O. came back to the Lobby, no longer with a light and jaunty step.

"My God!" said he to me, "just see what [A]



(naming my colleague) has let me in for. Parnell has abused me like a pickpocket, all on account of that d—d scoundrel K. (the Liberal candidate). It is a shame for [A.], and what harm, but we were at school together.” ’

Mr. Gladstone and Parnell now changed places. The ex-Minister became an agitator; the agitator a circumspect statesman. In England Mr. Gladstone fought the battle of Home Rule earnestly and bravely. He thought of nothing but Ireland, and allowed his followers to think of nothing but Ireland. His speeches were full of fire and energy. Had he been an Irishman they would have been called violent, perhaps lawless. He had, in truth, caught the spirit of Irish agitation. Had he been born under the shadow of the Galtee mountains his denunciations of English rule could not have been more racy of the soil.

Parnell, on the other hand, had become very moderate. It was clear that if the principle of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive were accepted, and if the subjects of land, education, and police were handed over to the Irish authorities, he would have been willing to consider every other question of detail in a conciliatory spirit.

‘Parnell,’ says Mr. Cecil Rhodes, ‘was the most reasonable and sensible man I ever met;’ and then the great colonist, whose extraordinary personality, whose remarkable power for commanding men, remind one so much of the Irish leader himself, told me the story of his relations with our hero. As this story bears upon the question of Parnell’s moderation, and serves to show how ready he was to accept a policy of ‘give and take,’ provided his main purpose was not jeopardised, it may be inserted here :

'I first saw Parnell in 1888. I had closely followed the Home Rule movement. It struck me in the light of local government. I always, even when I was at Oxford, believed in the justice and wisdom of letting localities manage their own affairs.

'Moreover, I was interested in the Home Rule movement because I believed that Irish Home Rule would lead to Imperial Home Rule. I had met Mr. Swift McNeill at the Cape, and I explained my views to him. I furthermore said that I was prepared to back my opinion on Home Rule substantially, which I did, for I sent Parnell 10,000*l.* for the Home Rule cause.

'I came to England in 1888, and saw Mr. Swift McNeill again, and he made arrangements for a meeting between myself and Parnell.

'We met at the Westminster Palace Hotel. After some preliminary conversation, Parnell said :

"Why, Mr. Rhodes, do you take an interest in this question? What is Ireland to you?"

'I replied that my interest in Ireland was an Imperial interest; that I believed Irish Home Rule would lead to Imperial Home Rule.

'*Parnell.* "What practical proposal do you make? What can I do for you?"

'*Rhodes.* "I think that the Irish members should be retained in the Imperial Parliament; first, for their own sake, next with a view to Imperial Federation, which is my question.

"(1) If the Irish members are excluded, nothing will persuade the English people but that Home Rule means separation; that Home Rule is the thin end of the wedge; and that when you get it you will next set up a republic, or try to do so. As long as the

English people feel this, how can you expect to get Home Rule? That is the political question as it affects you.

“(2) Next there is the personal question, if you like, which affects me. I want Imperial Federation. Home Rule with the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament will be the beginning of Imperial Federation. Home Rule with the Irish members excluded from the Imperial Parliament would lead nowhere, so far as my interests, which are Imperial interests, are concerned. Now do you see my point?”

‘*Parnell*. “Yes. I do not feel strongly on the question of the retention or the exclusion of the Irish members, but Mr. Gladstone does. The difficulty is not with me, but with him. He is strongly opposed to their retention. I have no objection to meeting English public opinion on that point if Mr. Gladstone would agree. Do you ask me for anything else?”

‘*Rhodes*. “Yes. I want a clause—a little clause—a permissive clause, in your next Bill, providing that any colony which contributes to Imperial defence—to the Imperial army or navy—shall be allowed to send representatives to the Imperial Parliament in proportion to its contributions to the Imperial revenue. Then I think the number of the Irish representatives should be cut down in proportion to Ireland’s contribution to the Imperial revenue, so as to keep Ireland in line with the Colonies. I think that would be quite fair.”

‘*Parnell*. “I have no objection to your permissive clause, but I should not consent to the reduction of the number of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament. It is only by our strength that we can make ourselves felt there, and if you were to cut us down to fifty or forty or thirty they would pay no attention to

us. We must remain in our present numbers. In addition, certain questions will remain still unsettled after the Home Rule Bill has been passed. There are questions relating to the police and the judiciary which may remain unsettled. We must have our full number of members in the Imperial Parliament until those questions are settled."

'*Rhodes*. "Very well. I can understand your difficulties. I do not press that point. Are we agreed on the other points?"

'*Parnell*. "I have no objection to the retention of the Irish members in their present numbers, nor to the permissive clause you suggest."

'*Rhodes*. "Will you put those points to Mr. Gladstone?"

'*Parnell*. "No. I do not think it would be wise for me to put the point to Mr. Gladstone now, he is so strongly opposed to retaining the Irish members. We must bring him gradually round."

'Ultimately it was arranged that I should write a letter to Parnell setting out my views, and that he should send me a reply.'

Parnell's reply was as follows :

*Parnell to Mr. Cecil Rhodes*

'June 23, 1888.

'DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 19th inst., which confirms the very interesting account given me at Avondale last January by Mr. McNeill as to his interviews and conversations with you on the subject of Home Rule for Ireland. I may say at once, and frankly, that you have correctly judged the exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster to have been a defect in the Home Rule

measure of 1886, and, further, that this proposed exclusion may have given some colour to the accusation so freely made against the Bill that it had a separatist tendency. I say this while strongly asserting and believing that the measure itself was accepted by the Irish people without any afterthought of the kind, and with an earnest desire to work it out with the same spirit with which it was offered—a spirit of cordial goodwill and trust, a desire to let bygones be bygones, and a determination to accept it as a final and satisfactory settlement of the long-standing dispute between Great Britain and Ireland.

‘I am very glad that you consider the measure of Home Rule to be granted to Ireland should be thoroughgoing, and should give her complete control over her own affairs without reservation, and I cordially agree with your opinion that there should be effective safeguards for the maintenance of Imperial unity. Your conclusion as to the only alternative for Home Rule is also entirely my own, for I have long felt that the continuance of the present semi-constitutional system is quite impracticable. But to return to the question of the retention of the Irish members at Westminster. My own views upon the points and probabilities of the future, and the bearing of this subject upon the question of Imperial federation—my own feeling upon the measure is that if Mr. Gladstone includes in his next Home Rule measure the provisions of such retention we should cheerfully concur with him, and accept them with goodwill and good faith, with the intention of taking our share in the Imperial partnership. I believe also that in the event I state this will be the case, and that the Irish people will cheerfully accept the duties and responsibilities assigned to them.

and will justly value the position given to them in the Imperial system. I am convinced that it would be the highest statesmanship on Mr. Gladstone's part to devise a feasible plan for the continued presence of the Irish members here, and from my observation of public events and opinions since 1885 I am sure that Mr. Gladstone is fully alive to the importance of the matter, and that there can be no doubt that the next measure of autonomy for Ireland will contain the provisions which you rightly deem of such moment.

'It does not come so much within my province to express a full opinion upon the larger question of Imperial federation, but I agree with you that the continued Irish representation at Westminster immensely facilitates such a step, while the contrary provision in the Bill of 1886 would have been a bar. Undoubtedly this is a matter which should be dealt with in accordance largely with the opinion of the colonies themselves, and if they should desire to share in the cost of Imperial matters, as undoubtedly they now do in the responsibility, and should express a wish for representation at Westminster, I certainly think it should be accorded to them, and that public opinion in these islands would unanimously concur in the necessary constitutional modifications.

'I am, dear sir, yours truly,

'CHAS. STEWART PARNELL.'

Besides this letter, besides his relations with Mr. Rhodes, Parnell gave many proofs of his moderation and reasonableness at this time.

He did not, he said, want an 'armed' police for Ireland. He would have been content with such a police force as existed in the English towns. If

Englishmen preferred the retention of the Irish members, he would have given way on that point. Mr. Gladstone insisted on a 'subordinate' Irish Parliament. Parnell said: 'So be it.'

Mr. Gladstone declared that the 'supremacy' of the Imperial Parliament should be acknowledged and upheld. Parnell said: 'Agreed.' And while making these concessions he never ceased to impress on his followers the necessity of keeping the peace in Ireland.

I cannot give a better illustration of the difference between Mr. Gladstone and Parnell at this period than by showing how each dealt with the Plan of Campaign. Parnell was opposed to the 'plan.' But it had been sprung upon him, and for a time he felt some difficulty in condemning it outright, though he always took care to disclaim all responsibility for its initiation and adoption. Finally he did condemn it in a speech at the Eighty Club on May 8, 1888. He was the guest of the evening, and I doubt if he ever addressed a more sympathetic and even enthusiastic audience. The young men who gathered around him that night would, I think, have cheered almost anything he said.

They were prepared for an advanced policy and an extreme speech. There was not a branch of the National League which would have more readily declared for the Plan of Campaign than the rising young Liberals of the Eighty Club.

When Parnell rose he was received with a burst of cheering which would certainly have gone straight to the heart of a 'mere Celt.' But he was impassive, frigid, unmoved. Having dealt with the Carnarvon incident, and by so doing won the plaudits of the company, he turned to the Plan of Campaign. This part of the speech acted as a cold douche on the assembly. I

never saw a highly strung meeting thrown so completely into a state of collapse. When he finished the fourth sentence my next neighbour poked me in the ribs and said: 'This is bad.' I think my friend's verdict was the verdict of almost everyone in the room.

Parnell said: 'I was ill, dangerously ill. It was an illness from which I have not entirely recovered up to this day. I was so ill that I could not put pen to paper or even read a newspaper. I knew nothing about the movement until weeks after it had started, and even then I was so feeble that for several months, absolutely up to the meeting of Parliament, I was positively unable to take part in any public matter, and was scarcely able to do so for months after. If I had been in a position to advise about it, I candidly admit to you that I should have advised against it.

'I should have advised against it not because I supposed it would be inefficacious with regard to its object—the protection of the Irish tenants. I believe I have always thought that it would be most successful in protecting the Irish tenants from eviction, and in obtaining those reductions in their rent which the Government of Lord Salisbury in 1886 refused to concede to me when I moved the Tenants' Relief Bill. My judgment in that respect has been correct. But I considered, and still consider, that there were features of the Plan of Campaign, and in the way in which it was necessary it should be carried out, which would have had a bad effect upon the general political situation—in other words, upon the national question.'

Next day Mr. Gladstone addressed a great meeting at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, when a Home Rule address, signed by 3,730 Nonconformist



ministers, was presented to him. Referring to Mr. Parnell's speech of the previous evening he said :

‘ Mr. Parnell has very properly said he was not the author of that plan, and that he is not prepared to vindicate it. Nor am I prepared to vindicate it, but I am prepared to say it ought, like the Rebecca riots and a hundred other cases, to be fairly judged. It ought to be well considered who were the real authors of the Plan of Campaign. I say boldly that the real authors of the Plan of Campaign are the present Government, and Mr. O'Brien and those who acted with him were really in the main instruments in the hands of the Government, for reasons which I will immediately tell you. What had taken place ?

‘ In the year 1886 a most disturbing incident had arisen in the Irish land question. The fall in agricultural prices brought about a crisis, and there was general apprehension that even judicial rents could not be paid by the tenants, and that the whole question of the land in Ireland must be reopened by the admission of the leaseholders, whom, in our supreme respect for contract, we had not consented to admit to the benefits of the Act of 1881. The Government appointed a commission to inquire how far this was the case, and whether the rents could be paid or not. We asked from the Opposition side of the House that while the commission was sitting temporary provision might be made to meet those cases where rents could not be paid. What did the Government do? They refused Mr. Parnell's Bill, and refused even the extremely modest demand I made myself that some time should be given to those who proved before the judicial tribunals that they could not pay rent. The Government declared judicial rents to be sacred, that it would be immoral to

alter them, that faith and honour forbade it. Then came the distress, then the evictions, then Bodyke, and then the Plan of Campaign.' Nor was Mr. Gladstone satisfied with a single reference to the subject. Speaking at a garden party at Hampstead on June 30, he referred to it again. He said: 'Do not suppose that I think the Plan of Campaign is a good thing in itself, or that I speak of it as such. I lament everything in the nature of machinery for governing a country outside the regular law of a country. But there are circumstances in which that machinery, though it may be an evil in itself—and it is an evil, because it lets loose many bad passions and gives to bad men the power of playing themselves off as good men, and in a multitude of ways relaxes the ties and bonds that unite society—I say there are many circumstances in which it is an infinitely smaller evil to use this machinery than to leave the people to perish.'

I will give another instance of the eagerness with which Mr. Gladstone took up every subject relating to Ireland, and of the vigour with which he treated it.

In September 1887 the police dispersed a meeting at Mitchelstown, firing on the people, when one man was killed and several were wounded. 'A subsequent and protracted inquiry,' says the 'Annual Register,' 'showed that the police had acted in a most reckless and apparently unauthorised manner. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the county inspector and three constables. But no steps were taken by the Executive to attach the blame to any of its officers, and "Remember Mitchelstown!" became a political watchword which will long stir sad memories.' Soon after the catastrophe Mr. Gladstone sent a telegram to a correspondent using these words:

‘Remember Mitchelstown.’ His fellow-countrymen were scandalised. But the old man stood to his guns. Speaking at Nottingham on October 18, 1887, he said: ‘Though I regret it very much, it has become a matter of absolute necessity not only to remember Mitchelstown, but even to mention Mitchelstown. It was our duty from the first to keep it in our minds for consideration at the proper time, but the sanction given to such proceedings by the Executive Government, of which the power in Ireland is enormous, requires from us plain and unequivocal and straightforward declarations, with a view to the formation of a sound opinion in England, in order that the pestilent declarations of Mr. Balfour may not be adopted, as they might be with great excuse, by his subordinate agents, and may not be a means of further invasion of Irish liberty, and possibly of further destruction of Irish life. To speak plainly, I say that the law was broken by the agents of the law, and that it is idle to speak to the Irish people about betraying the law if the very Government that so speaks, and that brings in these Bills, has agents which break the law, by advisedly and violently breaking the order of public meetings, and who are sustained in that illegal action.’

I remember being present at a great meeting in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, in 1888. I know not how many thousands were assembled there. But it was impossible for the human voice to reach the furthest limits of the vast multitude gathered within the ample dimensions of that immense structure. Mr. Gladstone’s speech was a wonderful effort, and the enthusiasm it evoked passed all bounds. Few who listened to him will forget the closing words of his address, or the extraordinary outburst of applause

which greeted them. He said: 'We have now got Ireland making a thoroughly constitutional demand—demanding what is, in her own language, a subordinate Parliament, acknowledging in the fullest terms the supremacy of the Parliament of Westminster. How can you know that under all circumstances that moderation of demand will continue? I cannot understand what principle of justice—and still less, if possible, what principle of prudence—it is that induces many—I am glad to say, in my belief, the minority of the people of this country, but still a large minority—to persist in a policy of which the fruits have been unmitigated bitterness, mischief, disparagement, and dishonour. Our opponents teach you to rely on the use of this deserted and enfeebled and superannuated weapon of coercion. We teach you to rely upon Irish affection and goodwill. We teach you not to speculate on the formation of that sentiment. We show you that it is formed already, it is in full force, it is ready to burst forth from every Irish heart and from every Irish voice. We only beseech you, by resolute persistence in that policy you have adopted, to foster, to cherish, to consolidate that sentiment, and so to act that in space it shall spread from the north of Ireland to the south, and from the west of Ireland to the east; and in time it shall extend and endure from this present date until the last years and the last of the centuries that may still be reserved in the counsels of Providence to work out the destinies of mankind.'

Some exaggeration there may have been in these words. But underlying them was a solid substratum of truth. I have not concealed the fact that Parnell rode into power on the wave of Fenianism. But this

wave had now receded. The tide of revolution had been rolled back. A political calm had succeeded the political storm. The Irish people were in a trustful mood. Never had they shown so strong a disposition to rely on parliamentary agitation. In England the cause of Home Rule was unquestionably progressing. The Liberals might or might not have fully understood the Irish demand; they might or might not have appreciated the difference between Local Government and a Parliament on College Green; they might have examined the question for themselves, or they might have been simply led by Mr. Gladstone; but, however these things might have been, the fact is certain—Home Rule was making way on this side of the Channel.

I cannot be expected to approach this subject in a spirit of perfect impartiality. I am an Irish Nationalist with strong convictions, and perhaps strong prejudices. My opinions are, doubtless, coloured by my hopes. Yet I cannot help expressing the belief that some future generation of Englishmen may recognise that Mr. Gladstone's policy was a policy of concord and of peace, well calculated, as sincerely designed, to gratify the national aspirations of Ireland without endangering the stability of the British Empire.

## CHAPTER XXI

## THE FORGED LETTER

ON March 7, 1887, the first of a series of articles entitled 'Parnellism and Crime' appeared in the 'Times.' These articles were written to prove that the Parnell movement was a revolutionary movement stained by crime, and designed to overthrow British authority in Ireland. The 'Times,' however, was not content with framing a general indictment against the Irish leader. The great journal came to close quarters with the arch-rebel. On April 18 it published a facsimile letter, purporting to bear his signature, in which the Phoenix Park murders were excused and condoned. Here it is :

'DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned that, though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons.

'Yours very truly,

'CHARLES S. PARNELL.'

Whatever Liberals may now say, there cannot be a doubt that the appearance of this document in a newspaper universally regarded as the Bible of English journalism threw the whole Liberal party into consternation.

'When I came down to breakfast on April 18,' said a Liberal friend, 'I took up my "Times." The first thing which met my eye was that infernal letter. Well, I did not much care about my breakfast after reading it. "There goes Home Rule," said I, "and the Liberal Party" too.'

I asked my friend if it did not occur to him that the 'Times' might have been mistaken—'let in.'

'The "Times" let in,' he exclaimed, 'the cleverest newspaper in the world let in! Why, that is the last thing that any man in England thought of. We were staggered, my dear sir, staggered—that is the plain truth of the business.'

Parnell's letter in the 'Times' was soon the talk of the town. An overwhelming blow had at length been dealt at the whole gang of rebels and murderers. Home Rule was laid in the dust. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that this was the thought and the hope of every Unionist in the land.

In the evening Parnell strolled leisurely down to the House of Commons. 'Have you seen the "Times"?' asked Mr. Harrington. 'No,' said the Chief, who rarely read any newspaper unless his attention was specially called to it. Then Mr. Harrington told him the news. 'Ah!' said Parnell, 'let me see it,' and they went to the Library. 'Parnell,' says Mr. Harrington, 'put the paper before him on the table, and read the letter carefully. I thought he would burst into some indignant exclamation, say "What damned scoundrels!

what a vile forgery!" but not a bit of it. He put his finger on the S. of the signature, and said quite calmly, as if it were a matter of the utmost indifference: "I did not make an S. like that since 1878." "My God!" I thought, "if this is the way he is going to deal with the letter in the House, there is not an Englishman who will not believe that he wrote it."

On the same evening Parnell dealt with the subject in the House thus:

'Sir, when I first heard of this precious concoction—I heard of it before I saw it, because I do not take in or even read the "Times" usually—when I heard that a letter of this description, bearing my signature, had been published in the "Times," I supposed that some autograph of mine had fallen into the hands of some person for whom it had not been intended, and that it had been made use of in this way. I supposed that some blank sheet containing my signature, such as many members who are asked for their signatures frequently send—I supposed that such a blank sheet had fallen into hands for which it had not been intended, and that it had been misused in this fashion, or that something of this kind had happened. But when I saw what purported to be my signature, I saw plainly that it was an audacious and unblushing fabrication. Why, sir, many members of this House have seen my signature, and if they will compare it with what purports to be my signature in the "Times" of this morning they will see there are only two letters in the whole name which bear any resemblance to letters in my own signature as I write it. I cannot understand how the managers of a responsible and what used to be a respectable journal could have been so hoodwinked, so hoaxed, so bamboozled—and that is the most



charitable interpretation which I can place on it—as to publish such a production as that as my signature, my writing. Its whole character is entirely different. I unfortunately write a very cramped hand, my letters huddle into each other, and I write with great difficulty and slowness. It is, in fact, a labour and a toil for me to write anything at all. But the signature in question is written by a ready penman, who has evidently covered as many leagues of letter-paper in his life as I have yards. Of course, this is not the time, as I have said, to enter into full details and *minutiæ* as to comparisons of handwriting, but if the House could see my signature and the forged, fabricated signature they would see that, except as regards two letters, the whole signature bears no resemblance to mine. The same remark applies to the letter. The letter does not purport to be in my handwriting. We are not informed who has written it. It is not even alleged that it was written by anyone who was ever associated with me. The name of the anonymous letter-writer is not mentioned. I do not know who he can be. The writing is strange to me. I think I should insult myself if I said—I think, however, that I perhaps ought to say it in order that my denial may be full and complete—that I certainly never heard of the letter. I never directed such a letter to be written. I never saw such a letter before I saw it in the “Times.” The subject-matter of the letter is preposterous on the surface. The phraseology of it is absurd—as absurd as any phraseology that could be attributed to me could possibly be. In every part of it it bears absolute and irrefutable evidence of want of genuineness and want of authenticity. Politics are come to a pretty pass in this country when a leader of a party of eighty-six members has to stand up at

ten minutes past one in the House of Commons in order to defend himself from an anonymous fabrication such as that which is contained in the "Times" of this morning.'

After this declaration the subject of the facsimile letter was for a time permitted to drop. The 'Times' went on printing the articles on 'Parnellism and Crime.' It also published some incriminating letters purporting to have been written by Mr. Egan, the former treasurer of the Land League. Finally, Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, ex-M.P., feeling himself aggrieved by certain statements in 'Parnellism and Crime,' took proceedings against the 'Times.' The 'Times' pleaded that nothing in the articles pointed at Mr. O'Donnell, and the jury took the same view of the case. However, in the conduct of the suit the 'Times' counsel—the Attorney-General<sup>1</sup>—reiterated the charge levelled at Parnell and Parnellism. The Irish leader was compelled to take immediate action.

He promptly asked the House of Commons to appoint a Select Committee to inquire whether the facsimile letter was a forgery. The Government would not consent to this proposal, but agreed to appoint a Special Commission, composed of three judges, to investigate all the charges made by the 'Times.'

In September 1888 the Special Commission met. The commissioners were Mr. Justice (afterwards Lord) Hannen, Mr. Justice Day, Mr. (now Lord) Justice Smith.

Each party to the cause was represented by a strong Bar, the Attorney-General leading for the 'Times,' Sir

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Webster, Q.C., M.P., G.C.M.G.

Charles Russell (now Lord Russell of Killowen, Lord Chief Justice of England) leading for Parnell.

Parnell concentrated all his attention on the facsimile letter. The general charges against the League were, in his opinion, ancient history, scarcely worth discussing, and certainly not worth the lawyers' fees which had to be paid for dealing with them. 'If,' he argued, 'we can prove the letter to be a forgery, everything else will go by the board. If we cannot prove it to be a forgery, then, no matter what may be the finding of the Commission on the general issue, we shall stand condemned. We must put the man who forged that letter into the box and wring the truth from him. Our victory will then be complete.'

Hence during the whole progress of the case he thought of the facsimile letter and of little else.<sup>1</sup> I shall now tell the story of that remarkable document.

In May 1885 a Unionist organisation—the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union—was formed in Dublin. The committee consisted of some of the most distinguished 'Loyalists' in the country. A young journalist, Mr. James Caulfield Houston, was appointed secretary.

The objects of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union were, in brief, to destroy the National party and to save the Empire. In this good work Mr. Houston—acting upon his own responsibility, he tells us—enlisted the services of Mr. Richard Pigott, of 11 Sandy Cove Avenue, Kingstown, Dublin.

Almost everyone versed in Irish politics knew 'Dick' Pigott, or knew of him. He was proprietor of the 'Irishman' newspaper, but had been bought out by Parnell. Professing patriotism, he was ready

<sup>1</sup> He attached little importance to the Egan letter. 'The whole case,' he said, 'is the facsimile letter.'

for valuable consideration to swear away the life of every honest man in the land. Most people shunned him as a moral leper whose very touch was contamination. There is something almost pathetic in the ruffian's account of himself in a letter written to Mr. Forster in 1882, when that gentleman held the office of Irish Secretary.

'I am within measurable distance of actual destitution. I have sought the humblest situations, but all in vain; no one will have anything to do with me.' Richard Pigott seldom told the truth. This was the truth.

In 1881 he asked Mr. Forster to subsidise his newspaper in the interests of the Government. In the very same year he asked Mr. Patrick Egan, the treasurer of the Land League, to give him financial support in the interest of the National cause.

On June 2, 1881, he wound up a long and loyal letter to the Irish Secretary, showing how he had always denounced the Land League, with this practical proposal:

'To come to particulars, a sum of 1,500*l.* would get me out of debt. I could manage with 1,000*l.* for the present, if I could compromise with some of my creditors. If the Government will let me have an advance of either sum I will be for ever after the most obedient and, I trust, valuable servant.'

On June 5 Mr. Forster sent a sympathetic reply, refusing the subsidy, but commending Richard for his 'patriotism':

'For months past I have noted the tone of the leaders in your papers, and what you say with regard to them is no more than the truth. I think they have

done real good, and I shall be sincerely sorry if your papers come to an end. But, coming to your actual proposal, I am obliged to say I cannot make the advance you suggest. . . . Allow me to add that, though I must still differ from you greatly, and though we approach Irish matters from very different points of view, yet I most sincerely appreciate the patriotism which has induced you to some extent to modify your views.'

In the same year Figott wrote to 'My dear Egan,' saying he had been offered 500*l.* to publish documents, mainly 'fabricated,' but which would nevertheless be injurious to the League, even if there were only a few grains of truth mixed up with the bushel of falsehood.

'I think,' he said, 'that the Castle people are the prime movers [in the matter].' Then he threatens the treasurer of the League. 'To come to the point, I am in dreadful straits. I must have money somehow, or throw up the sponge at once. I cannot afford to let slip so lucky a chance for saving myself literally from ruin. No matter what the consequences are, I must and will take this offer. Unless you come to my assistance I will close with these people.'

Mr. Egan, who knew his man, replied sharply and decisively:

'As I understand your letter, it is a threat that, unless I forward you money by Monday next, you will close with the Government, and in consideration of a sum of 500*l.* publish certain documents which you believe to be false against the Land League. Under any circumstances, I have no power so to apply any of the funds of the League, but even if I had the power I would not under such circumstances act upon it.

Whenever any such accusations are made we will know how to defend ourselves.'

Pigott wound himself into the kind heart of Mr. Forster, who was, of course, quite ignorant of the devious ways of Irish politics and of Irish politicians. The Chief Secretary had refused to subsidise Pigott's newspapers, but he was willing to give Pigott a little financial help out of his own private purse. On June 7 he wrote :

'If you find immediate difficulties so overpowering that you are forced to give up your paper and look out for other work, I hope you will allow me to let you have a sum of from 50*l.* to 100*l.*, which might help to tide you over the interim between the old and the new work, and which you would not repay unless times mend. I am not a rich man, but I have enough to enable me to help where I really feel sympathy, and I need not say I would secure that there was no publicity.'

Mr. Forster sent Pigott 100*l.*, urging him 'not to let the thought of repayment be a worry or a trouble to you,' which indeed it was not. Before the end of the year Egan published Pigott's 'begging' letters to him in the 'Freeman's Journal.'

Mr. Forster was astonished. On December 10 Pigott received the following letter :

Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park : Dec. 9, 1881.

'SIR,—Mr. Forster desires me to ask whether the letters purporting to be written by you to Mr. Egan, and sent by him to to-day's "Freeman's Journal," were really written by you.

'Your obedient servant,

'HORACE WEST.'

The wretched Pigott had to admit the authenticity of the letters, but offered an elaborate and futile explanation in self-defence. One of the last letters he received from Mr. Forster was dated January 13, 1882. Fortunate would it have been for the miserable outcast had he taken the advice then given by the tender-hearted Chief Secretary. Mr. Forster wrote :

‘I do not consider that you have any claim whatever either upon the Government or myself, and I must decline to ask any of my colleagues to give you pecuniary help. On the other hand, I should be glad if I could to help you out of your difficulties. So far as I can judge from what you tell me your best chance is in America, and I am willing to give you myself 50*l.* for the purpose of enabling you to go there, but it must be clearly understood that this is all I shall do!’<sup>1</sup> Mr. Forster sent the 50*l.*, but Pigott did not go to America. He remained in Ireland, to become, in due course, the ally of Mr. Houston and the ‘Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union.’

In 1885 Pigott was collecting materials for a pamphlet called ‘Parnellism Unmasked.’ He wrote to some prominent Unionist politicians for funds to publish this important work. It would seem that Mr. Houston heard of him and of his project through these politicians. But be this as it may, the fact is certain that in September 1885 the secretary of the ‘Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union’ called on the Nationalist renegade at his residence in Sandy Cove Avenue, Kingstown. ‘Parnellism Unmasked’ was at once discussed, and Mr. Houston finally gave Pigott 60*l.* towards its publication. The pamphlet appeared anonymously,

<sup>1</sup> These letters were produced before the Special Commission by Sir Wemyss Reid.

and, of course, made a stir in Unionist circles. But Mr. Houston wanted something more than pamphlets. He wanted documentary evidence 'connecting the Parnellite movement with the crime prevalent in the country.'<sup>1</sup> In December 1885 he asked Pigott to find this evidence. 'It is impossible,' said Pigott. 'Try,' urged Houston; 'I will pay you a guinea a day, and your hotel and travelling expenses during the search.'<sup>2</sup> This magnificent offer opened a new vista to the astonished vision of the disgraced and destitute journalist. He suddenly found himself in touch not with the blackguards of the League, but with the gentlemen of the 'Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union.'

'A guinea a day and hotel and travelling expenses.' Here was an offer which would have stimulated the energy even of a man not pinched by poverty. Pigott said he would try, but that he would have to travel a good deal. He did try, he did travel. He went to London, to Paris, to Lausanne, to New York, in search of Fenians, who, he said, hated Parnell, and would gladly strike a blow at the Irish leader if they could.

It is right to say that the 'Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union' did not—officially, at all events—supply Pigott with the funds for his benevolent mission. The money was got by the secretary of the organisation from certain distinguished Unionists—to wit, Sir Rowland Blennerhassett (member of the committee of the I. L. P. U.), Mr. Hogg, and—tell it not in Gath!—Lord Richard Grosvenor.

<sup>1</sup> *Special Commission*, Q. 51,722.

<sup>2</sup> See Houston's cross-examination by Sir Charles Russell, *Special Commission*, Q. 50,241. 'Mr. Pigott,' said Mr. Houston, 'did not consent right off; I had some difficulty in persuading him to undertake the work.' *Ibid.*, Q. 50,243.



These excellent personages supplied 'Dick' Pigott with a guinea a day and hotel and travelling expenses while he scoured Europe and America in search of documentary evidence to hang Parnell, or at least send him into penal servitude.

In March 1886 Pigott reported progress to Houston. He had found the documentary evidence—letters signed by Parnell, letters written and signed by Egan. They were at that moment in Paris, in a 'black bag,' where they had been left probably by Frank Byrne or 'by a man named Kelly, who was supposed to have purchased the Phoenix Park knives.'

Pigott gave Houston copies of these compromising documents, eleven letters in all, five of Parnell's and six of Egan's. Among this precious collection was the facsimile letter, sufficient in itself to annihilate Parnell and Parnellism. Towards the end of April Houston called on Mr. Buckle, the editor of the 'Times,' and told him the good news. Mr. Buckle, however, said he would have nothing to do with the business.<sup>1</sup>

In June Mr. Houston came back to Mr. Buckle, and tempted him once more to enter into the plot for the destruction of the Irish leader. But Mr. Buckle again said 'No.' In July Pigott went to Paris to get the letters, whither he was soon followed by Houston, accompanied by another distinguished Unionist, Dr. Maguire, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. Pigott, who seems to have been revelling in luxury, stopped at the Hôtel Saint-Pétersbourg. Mr. Houston and Dr. Maguire put up at the Hôtel des Deux Mondes. To the Hôtel des Deux Mondes Pigott came mysteriously one night—

<sup>1</sup> *Special Commission*, Q. 49,898. Mr. Buckle did, however, consul Mr. Macdonald, the manager of the *Times*.

the very night, indeed, of his confederates' arrival—the precious letters in his hand. 'Here they are,' said he. 'The men who have given them to me are downstairs and want to be paid immediately. I must bring down the money or bring back the letters.' Houston took the letters to his colleague, Dr. Maguire, in the adjoining room. They held a consultation, and in a few minutes came to the conclusion that the letters were genuine and that Pigott should be paid. Dr. Maguire advanced the money—850*l.* in Bank of England notes. Houston returned to his own room and handed Pigott 605*l.*—500*l.* for letters, the price demanded by the 'men downstairs,' and 105*l.* for a bonus for the industrious ambassador himself. Mr. Houston did not ask to see the 'men downstairs,' did not even ask their names. He took 'Dick' Pigott on trust. Hastening back to England he went, letters in hand, straight to Lord Hartington. 'I submitted them to him,' says Mr. Houston, 'and stated it would be desirable he should know of their existence. I asked him if he could give me any advice as to their use.' Lord Hartington, however, declined to 'advise.' Then the persistent young secretary of the 'Loyal and Patriotic Union' went back for the third time to Mr. Buckle.

Mr. Buckle now referred him to Mr. John Cameron Macdonald, the manager of the 'Times.' In October 1886 Mr. Houston brought the letters to Mr. Macdonald. Mr. Macdonald said that they should be submitted to the legal advisers of the 'Times,' and that if they were genuine Houston should be paid for them. Mr. Macdonald did not ask Houston from whom he had got the letters. 'I asked him no questions,' said the manager of the 'Times' before the Special Commission. '. . . I took his word throughout.' 'Had

you known Mr. Houston previously?' Mr. Macdonald was asked. 'Slightly,' he answered. 'I had met him once.' Mr. Houston had taken Pigott on trust, Mr. Macdonald took Mr. Houston on trust.

Mr. Soames, the legal adviser of the 'Times,' was next consulted. Like Mr. Macdonald, he asked 'no questions.' 'Did you ask [Houston] from whom he got the letters?' Mr. Soames was asked. He answered: 'I did not.' 'Did you at any time ask him from whom he got them?' 'Never.'<sup>1</sup> The letters were finally submitted to an expert in handwriting, pronounced to be genuine, and accepted and paid for by the 'Times.'<sup>2</sup>

On March 7, as we have seen, the first article on 'Parnellism and Crime' appeared, and some days before its appearance Mr. Houston told Mr. Macdonald for the first time that he had got the letters from Pigott. 'After Mr. Houston made this communication to you, did you make inquiries from other people as to who Pigott was?' Mr. Macdonald was asked. 'No,' he answered. 'What his antecedents were?' 'No; I had no means of doing so.'

On April 18 the facsimile letter was published. In July 1888 came the trial of O'Donnell v. Walter. Immediately afterwards the Special Commission was appointed,<sup>3</sup> and the Irish leader and the great English journal stood face to face.

Parnell, as I have said, concentrated all his atten-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Soames explained that 'Houston told me at the outset that he was pledged not to divulge the name' (Q. 48,537).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Houston subsequently got two more batches of letters, making eleven letters in all. The total sum paid by the *Times* for these letters was 2,530*l.* (*Report of Special Commission*, p. 58). The *Times* paid Mr. Houston for all purposes 30,000*l.* (Q. 49,010). These 'purposes' were in connection with Irish politics generally.

<sup>3</sup> The Bill was introduced on July 16 (*Annual Register*, p. 144).

tion on the facsimile letter. His one thought was: 'Who has done this thing? How can we find him out?'

'How did Parnell get on the track of Pigott?' I asked Mr. Harrington. 'Pat Egan,' he answered. 'The "Times" published a letter purporting to have been written by Egan. In that letter the word "hesitancy" was spelt with an "e," "hesitency."<sup>1</sup> Egan had in his possession letters of Pigott in which the word was spelt in exactly the same way. This aroused his suspicions, and he at once wrote to us: "Dick Pigott is the forger." Knowing Dick's character, we all shared Egan's suspicions except Parnell himself.'

Egan's suspicions were communicated to Parnell's solicitor, Mr. (now Sir George) Lewis. 'My first act,' says Sir George, 'on receiving Parnell's instructions to act for him was to serve a subpoena on Pigott. He was in Paris at the time, but we watched him until his return to this country, and my clerk served him with the subpoena as he was walking up and down the platform at Euston on his way to Ireland.'

The subpoena was served in September. On the 14th an agent employed by Mr. Labouchere<sup>2</sup> (who had resolved to enter the lists as a free lance) called on Pigott at Kingstown. Would he, so the agent asked, come to London to meet a man from America who wished to see him on important business? The

<sup>1</sup> Parnell suspected another man, whose name need not be mentioned, as the suspicion was quite unfounded.

<sup>2</sup> Soon after the appointment of the Commission an American Land Leaguer brought a packet of letters from Egan to Mr. Labouchere, which the latter gave Mr. Lewis. This man went subsequently to Ireland to see Pigott, and with the help of a confederate induced Pigott to come to London and see Mr. Labouchere.

meeting could take place at Mr. Labouchere's. Pigott fell into the trap. On October 25 he called at Mr. Labouchere's, to find himself confronted by Parnell.

Parnell and Mr. Labouchere charged him point blank with forgery. He said the accusation was false. Then Mr. Lewis entered the room. Parnell and Mr. Labouchere withdrew, and the lawyer and the journalist were left alone. 'Pigott,' said Mr. Lewis, 'you have forged these letters; we have abundant proof, we want no help from you. It is a question for yourself, What will you do? Will you confess your crime, tell the "Times," and let your letters be withdrawn, or will you brazen it out, go into the box, commit perjury, and be sent to penal servitude?' After a show of fight Pigott collapsed, and admitted his guilt. It was arranged that he should see Mr. Lewis next day and make a clean breast of everything in writing. But next day Pigott was in a different frame of mind. He repented his confession, denied his admission, refused to put anything on paper, and determined to brazen it out. On Wednesday, February 20, 1889, he went into the box as a witness for the 'Times.' On Thursday he was cross-examined by Sir Charles Russell. The story of Pigott's cross-examination belongs rather to the life of the Lord Chief Justice of England (Lord Russell of Killowen) than to the life of Charles Stewart Parnell. Those who witnessed the remarkable performance will never forget it. But to give a brief account of the scene would be to do an injustice to the great advocate. Some day the story will be told fully in the proper place. I am, unfortunately, obliged to pass over it lightly. I went into court that 21st of February, with, I am afraid, a joyous feeling, for I wished to see Pigott—whose history was not unknown to me—pilloried.

Yet before he had been an hour under the 'harrow' it was impossible not to pity the doomed wretch. I can well recall his appearance now, as the net was drawn closer and closer around him : the beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead and rolling down his face, the swollen veins, the short rapid breathing, the expression of misery and ruin which overshadowed his countenance, as all hope died away and the iron grip of the merciless advocate tightened round his throat. The fact was wrung from him that on March 4, 1887, three days before the appearance of the first article on 'Parnellism and Crime,' he wrote to Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, telling his Grace that 'certain proceedings are in preparation with the object of destroying the influence of the Parnellite party in Parliament.' Certain statements were to be published purporting to prove the complicity of Mr. Parnell himself and some of his supporters with murder and outrage in Ireland, to be followed by the institution of criminal proceedings against these parties by the Government.

'Your Grace may be assured that I speak with full knowledge, and am in a position to prove, beyond all doubt and question, the truth of what I say. And I will further assure your Grace that I am also able to point out how the designs may be successfully combated and finally met. . . . I can exhibit proofs, and suggest how the coming blow may be finally met. . . . I need hardly say that did I consider the parties really guilty of the things charged against them I should not dream of suggesting that your Grace should take any part in an effort to shield them ; I only wish to impress on your Grace that the evidence is apparently

convincing, and would probably be sufficient to secure conviction if submitted to an English jury.' Again he wrote: 'I was somewhat disappointed in not having had a line from your Grace, as I ventured to expect I might have been so far honoured. I can assure your Grace that I had no other motive in writing save to avert, if possible, a great danger to people with whom your Grace is known to be in strong sympathy. . . . I have had no part in what has been done to the prejudice of the Parnellite party, though I was enabled to become acquainted with all the details.'

Sir Charles rubbed every sentence of these letters into the bewildered witness. 'What do you say to that?' he asked.

*Pigott.* 'That appears to me clearly that I had not the letters in my mind.'

*Sir Charles.* 'Then if it appears to you clearly that you had not the letters in your mind, what had you in your mind?'

'It must have been something far more serious.'

'What was it?'

'I cannot tell you. I have no idea.'

'It must have been something far more serious than the letters?'

'Far more serious.'

'Can you give my Lord any clue of the most indirect kind to what it was?'

'I cannot.'

'Or from whom you heard it?'

'No.'

'Or when you heard it?'

'Or when I heard it.'

'Or where you heard it?'

‘Or where I heard it.’

‘Have you ever mentioned this fearful matter, whatever it is, to anybody?’

‘No. I was under the impression,’ exclaimed the unhappy man in an agony of despair, ‘that I had received back all my letters to Archbishop Walsh.’

On Friday, February 22, the cross-examination was resumed but not concluded. When Pigott left the box that afternoon, Parnell, near whom I was standing, remarked, ‘That man will not come into the box again.’ Then, turning to Mr. Lewis, he said: ‘Mr. Lewis, let that man be watched. If you do not keep your eye on him you will find that he will leave the country.’ ‘It is little matter to us now, Mr. Parnell,’ replied the lawyer, ‘whether he stays or goes.’

On its rising the court adjourned until Tuesday, February 26. On that morning when the judges took their places Pigott was called. There was no answer.

*President.* ‘Where is the witness?’

*Attorney-General.* ‘My Lords, as far as I know, I have no knowledge whatever of the witness, but I am informed that Mr. Soames has sent to his hotel, and he has not been there since eleven o’clock last night.’

*Sir Charles Russell.* ‘If there is any delay in his appearance, I ask your lordship to issue a warrant for his apprehension, and to issue it immediately.’

It was decided that no steps should be taken until the morrow, when perhaps some light might be thrown on this new development.

‘Parnell and I,’ says Mr. Harrington, ‘went to Scotland Yard to ask if anything had been heard of Pigott. Parnell carried a black bag. Mr. Williamson



pretended not to know us. "Mr. Williamson," said the Chief, "there is no need of mystery between you and me; I have often seen you following me." We left Scotland Yard and walked to the House. Suddenly Parnell discovered he had left his black bag behind. "Ah," he said, "they will think they have got a great find. But all they will see in the bag is a pair of dry socks and a pair of boots."

On the morrow the Attorney-General informed the court that a document in Pigott's handwriting had been received from Paris. A closed envelope addressed to one of the 'Times' agents in the case was then handed to Mr. Cunynghame, the Secretary to the Commission. The envelope contained a confession of guilt, taken down by Mr. Labouchere in the presence of Mr. G. A. Sala, and signed by Pigott on February 23<sup>1</sup> at Mr. Labouchere's house. I will quote only one passage from this confession :

*Letters.* The circumstances connected with the obtaining of the letters, as I gave in evidence, are not true. No one, save myself, was concerned in the transaction. I told Mr. Houston that I had discovered the letters in Paris, but I grieve to have to confess that I simply fabricated them, using genuine letters of Messrs. Parnell and Egan in copying certain words, phrases, and general character of the handwriting. I traced some words and phrases by putting the genuine letters against the window and placing the sheets on which I wrote over it. These genuine letters were the letters from Mr. Parnell, copies of which have been read in

<sup>1</sup> On Saturday morning, February 23, Pigott called of his own accord on Mr. Labouchere, saying he desired to make a full confession. Mr. Labouchere sent for Mr. Sala, who lived close by, to witness the statement. Q. 53,944.

court, and four or five letters from Mr. Egan which were also read in court. I destroyed these letters after using them. Some of the signatures I traced in this manner and some I wrote. I then wrote to Houston, telling him to come to Paris for the documents. I told him that they had been placed in a black bag with some old accounts, scraps of paper, and old newspapers. On his arrival I produced to him the letters, accounts, and scraps of paper. After a very brief inspection he handed me a cheque on Cook for 500*l.*, the price that I told him I had agreed to pay for them. At the same time he gave me 105*l.* in bank-notes as my own commission.'

In the face of this confession the 'Times' of course withdrew the facsimile letter,<sup>1</sup> and the Commission found that it was 'a forgery.' The last scene in this squalid drama was enacted on March 5. A warrant had been issued for Pigott's arrest on the charge of perjury. The police tracked him to an hotel in Madrid. 'Wait,' he said to the officers who showed him the warrant, 'until I go to my room for some things I want.' The officers waited. The report of a pistol was heard, there was a rush to Pigott's room, and the wretched man was found on the floor with a bullet through his brain. He had died by his own hand.<sup>2</sup> So ended the elaborate plot to destroy the Irish leader.

Some idea of the effect produced by the Pigott incident may be gathered from the following extracts from the diary of the late Mrs. Sydney Buxton, which I am permitted to publish :

<sup>1</sup> All letters were withdrawn.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Maguire, who had been summoned to give evidence for the *Times*, died suddenly in London.

'February 24, 1889: Eaton Place.

'A very exciting week. I spent Thursday and Friday, 21st and 22nd, at the Parnell Commission, hearing Pigott examined and coming in for the whole of his cross-examination by Sir C. Russell. There was only one and a quarter hours of this on Thursday afternoon, but it was the turn of the tide. It was the most exciting time I ever spent. In the end we came away simply astonished that a fellow-creature could be such a liar as Pigott. It was very funny, too; but I could not help thinking of Becky Sharp's "It's so easy to be virtuous on 5,000*l.* a year;" and to see that old man standing there, with everybody's hand against him, driven into a corner at last, after all his turns and twists, was somewhat pathetic.

'Of course, it is a tremendous triumph for the Home Rulers. I am a Unionist, and I feel this is a blow for Unionism.'

'26th February.

'There will be a great feeling that Mr. Parnell has been the victim of a conspiracy, as in the case of the letters he certainly has; and people won't stop to ask which facts are affected by the Pigott revelations.'

'Sunday, 3rd March, 1889: London.

'Another week of excitement about Pigott. On Tuesday the Commission re-assembled, and it was found he had bolted—leaving the "Times" to withdraw the letters and to make what is called an "apology." . . .'

On March 19 Parnell dined at Mr. Buxton's and met Mr. Gladstone. Mrs. Buxton writes:

' Sunday, 19th of March.

' A most exciting evening. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone dined here, and Mr. Parnell. After dinner Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell had a long talk. Mr. Gladstone of course assumed that Mr. Parnell knew all about the ancient history of Ireland, and when he said: "That occurred, you will remember, in '41," Mr. Parnell looked as if he didn't know what century, and didn't the least care.

' I thought Mr. Parnell most fascinating. He is very tall, grave, and quiet; rather amusing, in a serious, dry way, and—though he gives one the impression of being very reserved and perfectly impassive—perfectly willing to talk over everybody and everything. I had thought it would be uphill work finding subjects of conversation, as I imagined we could not discuss the Commission or mention "Parnellism and Crime," and I thought I should run dry over the Avondale mine. But before I knew where I was we were deep in Pigott, and he was telling me all about the interview at Labouchere's, where Parnell, Labouchere, and Lewis met Pigott. "Labouchere said to Pigott: 'I suppose you wanted to take the "Times" in?' and Pigott seemed to agree. But all of a sudden, turning to Parnell, he said, 'What should you say if I brought out a man who would swear to having had the letters in his possession and having sold them to me?' Parnell answered: 'Mr. Pigott, you will hardly find another such a scoundrel as yourself in the world.'"

' Mr. Parnell told me that all through Pigott's examination-in-chief he almost despaired of being able to prove the forgeries—Pigott's story seemed so well composed, and he himself so calm and collected. We talked a little about Home Rule and the future of Ire-

land—my Unionism getting very shaky—and about the prison question too.'

I shall now turn to a comical aspect of the case. We have seen that Mr. P. J. Sheridan was a Land League organiser. He was suspected of getting up outrages in the West when Parnell was in Kilmainham, and generally, outside Land League circles, he bore the reputation of a 'desperate character.'

At the time of the Commission he was settled in America, the proud possessor of 'two ranches and three thousand sheep.' The 'Times' was told that Sheridan could make 'terrible revelations,' eclipse Pigott, and blow the whole Irish parliamentary gang to pieces. That journal sent an agent, Mr. Kirby, to America to see and sound Sheridan.

Between the 'Times' agent in America and the 'Times' lawyer in London a number of telegrams (chiefly) in cypher passed. These telegrams fell into the hands of the Irish Nationalists. I am not permitted to tell the dramatic story of how the wires were 'tapped,' how the key to the cypher was discovered, and how the secrets of the 'Times' became known to the men whose destruction the 'Times' was compassing; but I hold copies of the telegrams, and shall set them out.

The first telegram, not in cypher, is from Kirby to Mr. Soames, and runs as follows:

'16th November, '88, Montevista, Colo.

'To Assert, London:

'Can purchase ranche and sheep. Particulars from Pueblo to-morrow.'

Mr. Kirby was, of course, a very shrewd gentleman, and his open telegram was, he says, merely sent as a

blind. The next telegram meant business, and was in cypher :

' 19th November, '88, Pueblo, Colo.

' To Assert, London :

' Message yesterday intended to mislead operators and others. Have been with Sheridan three days. He will give whole history of Land League that will convict if I buy his two ranches and 3,000 sheep, price 25,000*l.* Reply Chicago, Monday, Mohawk.'

It must be confessed that Sheridan put a very high price on the value of his services—25,000*l.*, which, no doubt, he regarded as a mere flyblow to the 'Times.'

The 'Times' did not reply immediately.

On December 11 Mr. Kirby wanted money, and he wired to Mr. Soames :

' Chicago : 11th December, '88.

' Cable two hundred pounds. Must return.'

Next day Mr. Soames wired :

' 12th December : London.

' To Kirby, Mohawk, Chicago :

' Court adjourns for five weeks. Come home at once. I must discuss matters personally with you. Money sent to Brown Brothers, New York. Reply when sail.—ASSERT.'

The next telegram is also from Mr. Soames :

' 24 December, '88 : London.

' To Kirby, Chicago :

' Never allow draft to be drawn on me. Cannot accept yours. Have cabled two hundred and fifty, Bank of Montreal. When will you sail?—ASSERT.'

Kirby then returned to London, but set out to

America again in the spring of 1889. On April 3 he wired to Mr. Soames :

' 3rd April, '89 : Pueblo.

' To Assert, London :

' Sheridan has wired to meet him Montevista, Tuesday morning. Leave to-night. Cable to-morrow night.—TAX.'

Not in cypher.

In the next telegram Kirby becomes Cæsarian in his language.

' 4th April, '89 : Aldmasa.

' To Assert, London :

' *Veni, Vidi, Vici*. Will cable early to-morrow Pueblo. Returning there.—TAX.'

On the morrow he cabled dramatically :

' 5 April, '89 Pueblo.

' To Assert, London :

' Sheridan met me yesterday, train Montevista; drove to ranch . . .<sup>1</sup>; said his offer to go to London and give evidence for 20,000*l.* caused Clan-na-Gael to sentence him to death. Two parties of the Clan were ordered to carry out sentence of the Executive. A member warned him. His life is sought; hence he threatens he will now go to London and prove the "Times" justification. His life is in hourly jeopardy here, two men have been on his track, and he has become desperate and determined to be revenged. He sticks to his terms and price, but demands immediate action, as his death has been ordered. He will go with me after twelfth if he is not killed, and justify the "Times," but demands proof of amount being at my command. Agree upon 10,000*l.*, which is to go to his

<sup>1</sup> I omit words the meaning of which is not intelligible.

family if he is killed before his evidence is given ; papers for ranch and stock to be completed ; the balance to be paid to order after Commission justifies the "Times." He has all documents to implicate Parnell, Dillon, and others. He is desperate and determined. He showed me documents connecting Parnell and Dillon with himself. If you want me to take him over, you must amend your evidence in court after reading my report as to his refusing any sum to go over to make his life more safe here. If I am to carry it through, place the net amount named to my credit Montreal Bank, Chicago, 500*l.* more for contingencies, and I will have it transferred on notice. If you don't accept he will leave at once for fresh clime, to save his life if he can. He will on the stand and otherwise prove the Parnell letter, and his and others' complicity. Direct reply here to-morrow, Saturday, Colonel Springs.—TAX.'

On April 5 the "Times" replied :

'To Tax, Pueblo :

'Cannot make out part of cable as to terms he wants. Repeat.'

Then the telegrams run on :

*'Kirby to Soames*

'23 April.

'Immediate reply most important.'

*'Soames to Kirby*

'2nd May.

'Am sending you by Saturday's mail. Cable name you use and address.'



*' Soames to Kirby*

' June 19.

' Has he satisfied you as to value of his evidence and existence of confirmatory documents? Reply and I will then cable definitely. Are you satisfied he is acting straight and will go on board with you? '

*' Kirby to Soames*

' 20th June.

' Satisfied he will go, as determined to revenge those who ordered his death. Believe he possesses full testimony.'

*' Soames to Kirby [part in cypher]*

' 22nd June, '89: London.

' Do not believe in his threat to bolt, nor can we place ourselves entirely in his hands. If risk so great between leaving and ship, it is all the more necessary he should not have documents on him. If he will show you documents, you are satisfied of their value as evidence, and he will hand them over when transfer made and money paid, you may dispense with written statements till he is on ship. If he will not agree to this it means he intends to sell us. Too late to cable money to-day. He gives no reason why he cannot do as asked.'

*' Kirby to Soames*

' 2 July, '89.

' Refuses anything in writing until safe away. Swears can and will give evidence to inculcate leaders. Won't sell us, as he wants to go and expose leaders who have condemned him. Has shown me documents in bulk, and has every letter as to League and dynamite. Won't go into details till on ship.'

*' Soames to Kirby*

' 2 July, '89.

'He must satisfy you that he has a number of documents genuine and of value. For all we know, those shown in bulk may be of no importance whatever. His danger is all the more reason why he should satisfy us if he means to go straight. Money deposited and ready to be cabled at moment's notice.'

*' Kirby to Soames*

' 10th July, '89.

'Have only his word that documents in bundle are from members and leaders, implicating all with League and outrage. Won't show me documents till on ship, as his name got in Press before. Think go straight to secure family, as home broken up; life in danger, and wants revenge on leaders who condemn him. But for that would not split.'

These telegrams, as I have said, fell into the hands of the Nationalists. An agent was sent at once to New York to see Sheridan. The agent arrived late one night on the ranch, having ridden I know not how many miles on horseback from the nearest railway station. He found Sheridan and Kirby discussing the 'Times' and the Special Commission over a bottle of whisky. He called Sheridan aside. 'What's all this about?' he asked. 'The wires have been tapped, we know everything. What's your game?' 'What's my game?' said Sheridan. 'Why, I want the "Times" to buy my ranch and give me 25,000*l*. If I get the money, the "Times" may whistle for my evidence. I have nothing to say, and nothing to give.'

The audacity of the proposal sent the agent into a

roar of laughter, and Sheridan joined in the merriment. The former was away betimes in the morning, and in a few days Parnell, sitting in the Commission court, learned that Sheridan was fooling Mr. Soames.

'Once bit, twice shy;' the 'Times' had had its lesson. It did not buy Mr. Sheridan's ranch, that gentleman did not come to London, and he is, so far as I know, still enjoying a pastoral life in the Far West.

On Tuesday, April 30, Parnell himself went into the box. He was subjected to a long and wearisome cross-examination, in the course of which he made but one slip—though a stupid and unaccountable slip. He said that, with the object of misleading the House of Commons, he had stated on January 7, 1881, that secret societies had then ceased to exist in Ireland. It turned out, on reference to 'Hansard,' that Parnell on this occasion was referring only to the Ribbon Societies, and that his statement was true.<sup>1</sup> Next morning I sat by him in court when the matter was put right. 'Why did you say it?' I asked. 'Well,' he answered quite coolly, 'I was not so bad as I thought. It turns out after all that I was not misleading the House. I said what was true.'

'I went,' says Mrs. Sydney Buxton, 'to hear Mr. Parnell examined before the Commission. I was disappointed in Mr. Parnell in one way—I thought

<sup>1</sup> 'As to the suggestion that crime was caused by secret societies, acting in antagonism to the Land League, Mr. Parnell, on January 7, 1881, stated in the House of Commons that secret societies had then ceased to exist in Ireland. Mr. Parnell was then alluding to secret societies other than that of the Fenian conspiracy, and in our judgment Mr. Parnell was accurate when he made that statement.' *Report of Special Commission*, p. 87.

him too discursive. His long explanations give the effect of evasiveness; but I suppose he wants to put them on record. He evidently makes a very good impression on Mr. Justice Hannen, and they are continually beaming on one another. "If you are fatigued, Mr. Parnell, pray be seated," says Mr. Justice Hannen. "I thank your lordship, not at all," says Parnell. All the same, he looks ghastly ill and very nervous. The Attorney-General loses his temper. It is "Attend to me, sir," "Answer my questions, sir," the whole time, while Parnell bows, with a grave courtesy which never seems to desert him. Sometimes they are all talking at once, while Parnell calmly proceeds with his line of argument. He scores off the Attorney-General all round, which makes it a trifle ridiculous when he is continually admonished to "Bring your mind to bear on this question, sir." The only admission got out of him yet is that, when in 1881 he said that "secret societies had ceased to exist in Ireland," he intended to mislead the House of Commons. Very shocking, of course; but I should like to see the Unionists cross-examined on oath as to their intentions, when they say that the power of the agitator is at an end in Ireland, and things of that description. Moreover, when one remembers the tremendous accusations brought against Mr. Parnell, a single instance of an attempt to mislead the House of Commons doesn't seem much to have proved!

Mr. Cunynghame was one day examining a large box full of letters written to Parnell. Parnell entered the room at the Law Courts while the Secretary was engaged in this work. 'Have you found anything incriminatory?' he asked. 'Well,' answered Mr. Cunynghame, 'the only letter I have found up to the

present which can be said to have any kind of political allusion in it is a letter from you to your sister containing this sentence: "I hear you have painted my room green; please change the colour."

Though the Commission still dragged its weary length along, almost all interest in its proceedings ceased with the Pigott incident, and ultimately the incriminated members and their counsel retired from the court.

The decisive battle had been fought over the forged letters, and Parnell was triumphant. Nationalists and Liberals turned the defeat of the 'Times' to good account. In Parliament and out of Parliament, Printing House Square was denounced, and the Government were held responsible for the indiscretion of their chief organ in the Press.

One night Mr. Labouchere asked in the House: 'Do any honourable members now think that the letters were genuine?' and there were murmurs which seemed to suggest that some of the occupants of the Tory benches did. Parnell sprang instantly to his feet, and in imperious tones said: 'Sir, I have risen for the purpose of asking this question of the hon. gentlemen opposite. Is there any one of them who will get up in his place, or, sitting in his place, by a shake of his head, or a nod, or a word, will venture to say that he believes that there is any doubt whatever as to the forgery of these letters, which have been alleged to have been signed by me?'

This question, asked with an air of dignity, *hauteur*, and kingliness, produced a deep impression upon the House. The Liberals cheered again and again, and the Tories sank into profound silence.

On March 8 there was a dinner of the 'Eighty Club' at Willis's Rooms. The late Sir Frank Lock-

wood presided. Lord Spencer, Lord Rosebery, and Parnell were present. The Irish leader received a perfect ovation, and when he and Lord Spencer shook hands across Lord Rosebery there was an extraordinary scene of excitement and enthusiasm. 'That was the first time I had met Parnell since his entrance into public life,' says Lord Spencer, 'and then there was what Lord Rosebery called "the historic handshake" between him and me.'

'It was a wonderful scene,' said one who was present. 'But what struck me most was Parnell's indifference to all that went on around him. He did not appear to be in the least moved by the warmth of his reception. He could not have had a more sympathetic audience, but he seemed not to care whether he was in touch with us or not. The man has no heart, I thought. But he made a speech which I have never forgotten. It was courageous and statesmanlike, and summed up the situation with incisive accuracy.'

Parnell, who on rising was received with loud and prolonged cheers, the audience springing to their feet and waving their napkins over their heads, said :

'There is only one way in which you can govern Ireland within the constitution, and that is by allowing her to govern herself in all those matters which cannot interfere with the greatness and well-being of the Empire of which she forms a part. I admit there is another way. That is a way that has not been tried yet. . . . There is a way in which you might obtain at all events some present success in the government of Ireland. It is not Mr. Balfour's bastard plan of a semi-constitutional, a semi-coercive method. You might find among yourselves some great Englishman, or Scotchman, who would go over to Ireland—her parliamentary repre-

resentation having been taken away from her—and would do justice to her people notwithstanding the complaints of Irish landlordism. Such a man might be found who, on the one hand, would oppose a stern front to the inciters of revolution or outrage, and on the other hand would check the exorbitant demands of the governing classes in that country, and perhaps the result might be successful. But it would have to be a method outside the constitution, both on the one side and on the other. Your Irish Governor would have to have full power to check the evil-doer, whether the evil-doer were a lord or a peasant; whether the malefactor hailed from Westminster or New York, the power should be equally exercised and constantly maintained. In that way, perhaps, as I have said, you might govern Ireland for a season. That, in my judgment, from the first time when I entered political life, appeared to me to be the only alternative to the concession to Ireland of full power over her own domestic interests and her future. In one way only, I also saw, could the power and influence of a constitutional party be banded together within the limits of the law; by acting on those principles laid down by Lucas and Gavan Duffy in 1852, that they should hold themselves aloof from all English political parties and combinations, that they should refuse place and office for themselves or for their friends or their relations, and that the Irish constituencies should refuse to return any member who was a traitor to those pledges.'

In July Parnell was presented with the freedom of the city of Edinburgh, and made what Fenians called a 'disgustingly moderate' speech. He said: 'In what way could Ireland, supposing she wished to

injure you, be more powerful to effect injury to your Imperial interests than she is at present? If you concede to her people the power to work out their own future, to make themselves happy and prosperous, how do you make yourselves weaker to withstand wrongdoing against yourselves? Will not your physical capacity be the same as it is now? Will you not still have your troops in the country? Will you not still have all the power of the Empire? . . . In what way do we make you weaker? In what way shall we be stronger to injure you? What soldiers shall we have? What armed policemen shall we have? What cannon shall we have? What single means shall we have, beyond the constitution, that we have not now, to work you injury?'<sup>1</sup>

On November 22 the Special Commission held its last sitting; on February 13, 1890, the report was made.

On that evening Parnell and Mr. Cunynghame had the following conversation in the Lobby of the House of Commons.

*Parnell.* 'Can you tell me some of the conclusions?'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'Well, I think I might do this provided it is understood they are for your own ear only, and that you will not quote me.'

<sup>1</sup> The proposal to present Parnell with the freedom of Edinburgh led to much controversy in that city. The vote was challenged three times in the Council, but was finally carried by a majority of 22, the whole Council numbering 41 members. Afterwards there was a plébiscite of the inhabitants, the question submitted being: 'Do you wish Mr. Parnell to receive the honour of the freedom of the city of Edinburgh?' 21,014 replies were received, of which 17,813 were in the negative and 3,201 in the affirmative. Thus Parnell received the freedom of the city, though according to the plébiscite there was a majority of the citizens against it.—*Annual Register*, 1889, p. 161.



*Parnell.* 'What do they find about me, as regards crime?'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'Practically a complete acquittal on all crime for you; Phoenix Park murders and the rest.'

*Parnell.* 'What about boycotting?'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'They give it as hot as they can to you on that.'

*Parnell.* 'And how about separation? What do they say about me?'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'That no one on earth can say what your views are, and I think it is not far wrong.'

*Parnell.* 'What about Davitt?'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'They give it to him pretty well, except that they say he denounced crime honestly. You will be in opposition to him some day.'

*Parnell.* 'I am not in opposition to him' (very quickly).

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'Ah! but I meant if a change took place.'

*Parnell.* 'Oh, in a Home Rule Parliament that is possible, but he will find Ireland a very bad place for advocating socialistic schemes.'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'Yes; that is what I meant.'

*Parnell.* 'What about the others?'

*Mr. Cunynghame.* 'They find several others guilty of entering the movement with a view to separation, but that the Land League movement does not necessarily involve being a complete socialist movement. As to crime, they say that no one plotted it, but that inflammatory speeches and actions were continued notwithstanding the results of them in producing crime were known.'

*Parnell.* 'Well, really, between ourselves, I think it is just about what I should have said myself.'

So far as what may be called the personal issue between Parnell and the 'Times' was concerned, the Commissioners gave judgment for Parnell on every point. The forged letters, of course, went by the board. But there were three other specific charges against the Irish leader which the Commissioners emphatically dismissed.

'There remain,' says the report, 'three specific charges against Mr. Parnell, namely :

'(a) That at the time of the Kilmainham negotiations Mr. Parnell knew that Sheridan and Boyton had been organising outrage, and therefore wished to use them to put down outrage.

'We find that this charge has not been proved.

'(b) That Mr. Parnell was intimate with the leading Invincibles, that he probably learned from them what they were about when he was released on *parole* in April 1882, and that he recognised the Phoenix Park murders as their handiwork.

'We find that there is no foundation for this charge. We have already stated that the Invincibles were not a branch of the Land League.

'(c) That Mr. Parnell, on January 23, 1883, by an opportune remittance, enabled F. Byrne to escape from justice to France.

'We find that Mr. Parnell did not make any remittance to enable F. Byrne to escape from justice.'

So far as the issue between the 'Times' and the Irish members generally is concerned, I have thought it right to set out the 'conclusions' of the Commissioners in an Appendix. On reference to these

' conclusions ' the reader will see that in some instances the Commissioners found for the 'Times,' in others for the Irish members.<sup>1</sup>

In fine, Parnell had weathered the storm. But the gleams of sunshine which once more fell upon his path were dimmed by the shadow of coming disaster.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix. The sum subscribed to cover the expenses of the Irish members was 42,000*l.*—*Annual Register*, 1890, p. 74.

## CHAPTER XXII

## A NEW TROUBLE

PARNELL'S career, from his entrance into public life in 1875 until the beginning of 1890, had been almost an unbroken record of success. He had silenced faction, quelled dissensions, put down rivalries, reconciled opposing forces, combined Constitutionalists and Revolutionists, healed the ancient feud between Church and Fenians, and organised and disciplined the most formidable parliamentary army that a statesman ever led—in a word, he had united the Irish race all the world over, and placed himself at the head, not merely of a party, but of a nation. He had defeated almost all his enemies in detail. Forster had been crushed, the Pope repulsed, Mr. Gladstone conquered, the 'Times' overthrown, the Tories shaken, the Liberals scattered or subdued. No man, no party, no force which had come into conflict with him escaped unscathed.

It even looked as if the reverse of 1886 would be immediately wiped out, and that England, under the magic of Mr. Gladstone's influence, would at length grant the uttermost demands of the Irish leader.<sup>1</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> At the General Election the Government majority was 114. It had steadily been sinking year by year, since in 1887 it was 106; in 1888 it was 88; in 1889 it was 79; in 1890 it was 70 (*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 27, 1888, and *Annual Register*, 1890, p. 40).

the opening days of 1890 he had, indeed, reached the highest pinnacle of his fame; he seemed to be invincible. Yet he was standing on a mine, and while the air still rang with the rejoicing which hailed his latest triumph the train was fired, his doom was sealed.

On December 24, 1889, Captain O'Shea filed a petition for divorce on the grounds of his wife's adultery with Parnell. I repeat that I do not think it is my duty to enter into the details of this unfortunate suit. Mrs. Charles Stewart Parnell and her children are still alive. I must consider her and them. I shall not dwell on a subject full of sorrow and pain to both. The diary of a good and brave Englishwoman lies before me. She had met Parnell, and, like so many others, had fallen under the spell of his wonderful personality. The proceedings in the Divorce Court shocked and scandalised her; yet with her feelings of regret and pain were mingled the recollections of Parnell's public services, and of the trials and persecutions which he had borne for his country's sake. On October 7, 1891, when the news of his death was flashed throughout the land, sorrow for his tragic fate overshadowed every other thought, and she closed her diary that day with the simple words: 'We mean to forget all the last year. I shall always think of him as a fine man, and be proud to have known him.'

With these words I shall pass lightly over the proceedings in the Divorce Court, and consider only their effect on the public life of Parnell.

In December he was served with a copy of the petition in 'O'Shea v. O'Shea and Parnell.'

'I saw him at Mr. Lewis's,' says the gentleman who acted for Captain O'Shea. 'On coming into

the room I found him sitting on the lounge. "Mr. Parnell, I think," I said. "Yes," he said, with the air of quiet unconcern which surprised me. Then, stretching out his hands, he added: "I think you have got some papers for me." I replied, "Yes," and put the papers in his hand. "There, Mr. Lewis," he said, flinging the papers carelessly on the table. "Now," he said, turning to me, "is there anything else?" I said "No," and withdrew. I was astonished at his coolness. Here was an affair of the greatest gravity, something to frighten any man—above all, a man in public life. But he tossed the papers on the table as if it were some trumpery business not worth his personal attention. He was polite and courteous, but when he asked me if there were "anything else" the plain meaning of his words was: "Now get out."

The session of 1890 was hopelessly dull. People were looking forward to the General Election, and troubled themselves little about the proceedings in the House of Commons. Public interest centred chiefly in Parnell. In the first months of the year the report of the Special Commission attracted general attention. It was debated in Parliament, discussed in the country, talked about everywhere. Then interest in the subject flagged. But Parnell was still the central figure in the public mind. People had no sooner ceased to talk and think about the Special Commission than they began to talk and think about the 'O'Shea divorce case.'

In the autumn I met an Irish member, who asked: 'What do you think will be the upshot of the divorce case?' I said: 'I do not know. What will you Irish members do, suppose it turns out badly?' He answered: 'What will we do? Why, of course stick

to Parnell. What do you think would make us give him up?' In justice to this member I must say he did stick to Parnell to the end.

Some weeks later I met a distinguished member of the Liberal party. He said: 'What will happen if the divorce proceedings end, which is not unlikely, unfavourably to Parnell?' I replied: 'I fancy the Irish members will stick to him whatever happens, however it ends.' He said: 'Yes, that is likely; but what will the Irish people do?' I replied: 'Oh, the Irish people will stand by him if there is no division among the members, you may be quite sure of that.' He said: 'I think that is likely enough.' 'But,' he added, 'what will the Church do? There is the difficulty.' I said: 'Yes, if the people stand by Parnell I think the Church will be placed in a very difficult position. The bishops may find themselves obliged to withdraw for a time from the movement. That, I think, would be a preferable course, and a more likely course, than to fight the people.' 'Well,' my friend replied, 'it may be so. I do not know; but there will be many difficulties in the case.' I then said: 'What will you do?' 'If you mean me personally,' he answered, 'I will do nothing. It does not concern me.' I said: 'What will the Liberal party do?' He answered: 'I do not really see what affair it is of the Liberal party. It is a matter for you Irish.' 'Well, then,' I replied, 'if that be so, if you do nothing on this side, Parnell is safe.' And so our talk ended.

On Saturday, November 15, the trial began. There was no defence, and on Monday the 17th the court granted a decree *nisi* for the separation of Captain and Mrs. O'Shea.

It is needless to say that the Tory leaders and the Tory Press, still wincing under the Pigott *exposé*, eagerly seized the new weapon so opportunely placed in their hands for the destruction of the man whom they hated and feared. The 'Times' was now to have its revenge.

But how was the news received in Irish and Liberal political circles?

I shall let Irish and Liberal politicians themselves answer this question.

On Tuesday, November 18, there was a meeting of the National League in Dublin. Mr. John Redmond presided; he was supported by Mr. Swift MacNeill, M.P., Mr. Donal Sullivan, M.P., Mr. Leahy, M.P., Mr. Clancy, M.P., Mr. Leamy, M.P., Mr. W. Redmond, M.P., Dr. Kenny, M.P., and other prominent politicians. A resolution pledging the meeting to stand by Parnell, despite the proceedings in the Divorce Court, was carried by acclamation. Mr. Swift MacNeill and Mr. Donal Sullivan gave expression to the general opinion in the following words:

Mr. Swift MacNeill: 'The first thing I desire to say is to express from the depths of my heart my unswerving affection and allegiance to Mr. Parnell. God forbid that he who led us in time of difficulty should be deserted by us in cloudy and dark days. I esteemed it as a great honour and privilege to stand beside Mr. Parnell when he made his first speech, fifteen or sixteen years ago, and I know no higher honour than to stand by Mr. Parnell when he makes his first speech in the Parliament in College Green.'

Mr. Donal Sullivan: 'I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without expressing my confidence in the leader of the Irish parliamentary party. I have



recently come from a visit to my constituents in County Westmeath, and I can say that both in the north and south of the county the desire of the people is that, come weal or woe, as long as I have the honour to represent Westmeath, I shall fight by the side of our great leader, and shall never falter in his ranks.'

On the same day the following paragraph appeared in the London letter of the 'Freeman's Journal.'

'I have direct authority for stating that Mr. Parnell has not the remotest intention of abandoning, either permanently or temporarily, his position or his duties as leader of the Irish parliamentary party. This may be implicitly accepted as Mr. Parnell's firm resolution, and perhaps by learning it in time the Pigottist Press may be spared the humiliation of indulging in a prolonged outburst of useless vilification. In arriving at this determination, I need not say that Mr. Parnell is actuated exclusively by a sense of his responsibility to the Irish people, by whose suffrages he holds his public position, and who alone have the power or the right to influence his public action. The wild, unscrupulous, and insincere shriekings of the Pigottists on the platform and in the Press can and will do nothing to alter Mr. Parnell's resolve.'

On Wednesday, the 19th, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., and Mr. John Dillon, M.P. (who had some time previously been sent with Mr. Harrington and Mr. T. D. Sullivan to America as delegates to raise funds for the national cause), were interviewed, and all three strongly declared their unflinching allegiance to the Chief.

*Mr. T. P. O'Connor.* 'It is for the Irish alone to choose their leader, and, besides, all English statesmen acknowledge that Mr. Parnell is the greatest parlia-

mentary leader that the Irish ever had. His disappearance from that post would create dismay among the Nationalists.'

*Mr. William O'Brien.* 'Speaking as an individual, I will stand firmly by Parnell, and there is no reason why I should not.'

*Mr. Dillon.* 'I can see nothing in what has occurred to alter the leadership of the Irish party in the House of Commons. A change would be a disaster.'

'Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Dillon, and I,' says Mr. T. D. Sullivan, 'having journeyed from Boston, arrived at Buffalo and put up at Hotel Iroquois. Scarcely had we got inside the precincts when a number of reporters were upon us, pencil and paper in hand, to ascertain our views of the Parnell crisis. None of us had any wish to be interviewed on that painful subject, but it would have been unwise to meet those Press representatives with a blank refusal. In reply to their inquiries, Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien expressed themselves strongly in favour of a continuance of Mr. Parnell's leadership. The question was then put to me. My reply was that my colleagues had spoken for themselves, and for my part I preferred to say nothing on the subject at present. The pressmen then left. Shortly afterwards a message was brought to me that Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien wished to see me in a sitting-room upstairs. Thither I went, and saw before me those two gentlemen with very grave faces and evidently in much mental trouble. They soon informed me that by my conduct in not allowing their opinions to be taken as mine also I had in all likelihood done a terrific injury to the Irish national cause. It is needless to say that the more eloquent gentleman of the two on this topic was Mr. O'Brien. The responsibility I had incurred, they said,

was tremendous. I had let those sharp American pressmen see that I was not entirely of one mind with Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien; it was splendid copy for them, just the sort of thing they wanted—evidence of disunion among the delegates. "Oh, they fished for it, they fished for it," said Mr. O'Brien, "and they got it."

On the same day, November 19, Mr. Labouchere declared boldly for Parnell. Writing in 'Truth,' the brilliant Radical journalist said: 'It is not for the English to decide who the Irish leader is to be. This concerns the Irish alone. My advice, if I might take the liberty to tender it, to Mr. Parnell is that he should not be diverted from the task he has set himself, to free his people, by anything that has occurred or may occur. When Parliament meets I trust that he will be in his seat, and that, utterly ignoring the vilifications and abuse of those who before tried to crush him under false charges, he will devote himself with singleness of purpose to his patriotic tasks.'

On Thursday, November 20, there was a great meeting of Irish Nationalists and Liberals in the Leinster Hall, Dublin.

'Healy,' says Mr. William Redmond, 'was at the time ill. Kenny, Jack, and I went to see him, and to have a talk about the coming meeting. "Have any resolutions been prepared?" he asked. We said, "No." "Then," says he, "give me a sheet of paper and I will write them. We'll teach these d—d Nonconformists to mind their own business," and he wrote the resolutions there and then. He next said: "Wire for Justin," and we wired.' Mr. Healy, despite his indisposition, attended the Leinster Hall meeting, which was a large and representative gathering of Nationalist members. At the commencement of the proceedings

the following cable from the American delegates was read.

‘We stand firmly by the leadership of the man who has brought the Irish people through unparalleled difficulties and dangers, from servitude and despair to the very threshold of emancipation, with a genius, courage, and success unequalled in our history. We do so, not only on the ground of gratitude for those imperishable services in the past, but in the profound conviction that Parnell’s statesmanship and matchless qualities as a leader are essential to the safety of our cause.’

This cablegram was signed by Mr. John Dillon, Mr. William O’Brien, Mr. T. Harrington, and Mr. T. P. O’Connor. Mr. T. D. Sullivan refused to sign it.

The cablegram having been read amid enthusiastic cheering, Mr. Justin McCarthy proposed the following resolution, which was carried by acclamation :

‘That this meeting, interpreting the sentiment of the Irish people that no side issue shall be permitted to obstruct the progress of the great cause of Home Rule for Ireland, declares that in all political matters Mr. Parnell possesses the confidence of the Irish nation, and that this meeting rejoices at the determination of the Irish parliamentary party to stand by their leader.’

Speeches in the spirit of the resolution were then made. I will give a few extracts :

*Mr. McCarthy.* ‘I ask you, suppose a man has gone morally wrong in some case, whatever temptation we know not, is that the least reason to excuse him from doing his duty to the people whom he is leading to victory? (Applause.) Is it the least reason why, because he may have gone wrong in some private question, he should fail in his duty to lead his people

in some great question of national and of public importance? Can we say to that man: "We can do without you?" ("No.") We know we cannot say it—we cannot possibly say it. (Applause.) We say to him: "We want you to lead us, as you have done; and we recognise no reason why you should be exempted from the great public duty of leading the Irish party and the Irish people to a public victory." (Applause.)

*Mr. Healy.* 'I would say this further, that we must remember that for Ireland and for Irishmen Mr. Parnell is less a man than an institution. ("Hear, hear.") We have under the shadow of his name secured for Ireland a power and authority in the councils of Great Britain and the world such as we never possessed before—(applause); and when I see a demand made for retirement and resignation I ask you to remember the futility thereof. Were Mr. Parnell to-morrow to resign his seat for Cork, he would instantly be re-elected. (Applause.) . . . I say it would be foolish and absurd in the highest degree were we, at a moment like this, because of a temporary outcry over a case that in London would be forgotten to-morrow if there were a repetition of the Whitechapel murders. . . . I say we would be foolish and criminal if we, the seasoned politicians who have seen and who have been able to watch the vagaries and tempests of political passages—if we, upon an occasion of this kind, at the very first blast of opposition, surrendered the great Chief who has led us so far forward. (Renewed applause.) If we, who have been for ten years under the leadership of this man, and who have been accused of harbouring all kinds of sinister ambitions and greedy desires to pull him down, if we join with this howling

pack, would that be a noble spectacle before the nations?’

*The McDermott.* ‘We are at present in a political strife, and we refuse to intermingle with it considerations which are only suggested for our destruction. Were the soldiers of the Nile and the soldiers of Waterloo to stand still in the moment of combative battle to inquire whether their commander had observed one of the Ten Commandments?’

On November 20 Mr. T. P. O’Connor and Mr. Dillon were again interviewed.

*Mr. T. P. O’Connor.* ‘Mr. Parnell has done too much for the Irish people for them to go back on him now. I declare that the whole Irish people will support the envoys in upholding Mr. Parnell, and there is convincing proof that Ireland is socially, enthusiastically, and fiercely on the side of the Irish leader.’

*Mr. Dillon.* ‘I do not think the priests will ask the people to abandon the movement if Mr. Parnell remains the leader of the party. One cablegram from Europe reports me as saying that Mr. Parnell will have to retire. It is all moonshine. I have the utmost confidence in him.’

On Friday, November 21, Mr. Pritchard Morgan, M.P., wrote to the ‘Freeman’s Journal’: ‘I would remind [Mr. Parnell’s] political opponents, particularly his leading opponents, who are crying aloud for his retirement, of the Scriptural injunction, “He that is without sin amongst you, let him cast the first stone.” The conduct of Mr. Parnell’s political opponents clearly indicates that chivalry in politics is an unknown quality, that cunning and intrigue have taken its place.’

On Saturday, November 22, Mr. Jacob Bright wrote to the ‘Manchester Guardian’: ‘You appear

to recommend that Mr. Parnell should retire for a time from public life. I take a different view. I think it is his duty to remain at his post. If a man commits a grave fault, the best atonement he can make is to do all the good he can in the direction clearly indicated by his own talents and experience. The place where Mr. Parnell can render service to his country and ours is in the House of Commons.

‘That the Irish people should cling to the man who has rendered them immeasurable service, that they should decline to sit in judgment upon him, gives me unalloyed pleasure. They can do this without any suspicion as to their motive, because they are the purest nation upon earth.’

On November 24 Mr. Illingworth addressed a public meeting in Bradford. He said: ‘Mr. Parnell has rendered great service to the Irish people and the cause of Home Rule. He has piloted Home Rule nearly into its haven. Would the passengers of a vessel from America, which had been skilfully manœuvred through many dangers and navigated through many storms, depose the captain while yet the ship had to be threaded through the crowded sea and the Mersey, because they heard on the voyage that the captain had been guilty of a moral offence?’

Amid this chorus of friendly opinion four jarring notes were struck:

- (1) By the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, in the ‘Methodist Times’;
- (2) By Mr. Cook, in the ‘Pall Mall Gazette’;
- (3) By Mr. Davitt, in the ‘Labour World’;
- (4) And by Mr. Stead in the ‘Review of Reviews.’

All three took their stand on the moral question, and said, in effect, ‘Mr. Parnell must go.’

4  
On Friday, November 21, the National Liberal Federation met at Sheffield. There was no public expression of opinion, but there were rumours of disapproval in private, and strong representations were made to Mr. Morley—who attended the meeting—that the Nonconformists would insist on Parnell's resignation. Mr. Morley, on his return to London, saw Mr. Gladstone, and reported what he had seen and heard, and said that Parnell's leadership had become impossible. Sir William Harcourt, who had also been at Sheffield, supported Mr. Morley. Mr. Gladstone was impressed by what his colleagues told him, and he resolved to abandon Parnell.

On Sunday, November 23, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes made an oracular statement at a gathering at St. James's Hall. He said: 'I have high authority for saying that Mr. Gladstone will intervene, and Mr. Parnell will recognise his voice as one to be obeyed.'

On Monday, the 24th, the day before the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Gladstone came to London. He sent immediately for Mr. Justin McCarthy, who called upon him at 1 Carlton House Terrace. Mr. McCarthy has given me an account of what passed.

'Mr. Gladstone said that Parnell had offered to consult him after the Phoenix Park murders, and asked me if I thought that Parnell would consult him again now. I said I did not know. Gladstone said that the Liberals might lose the General Election if Parnell remained leader of the Irish party. He did not ask that Parnell should resign. He did not show me any letter. He did not at our meeting ask me to convey anything to Parnell, and, besides, I should not have done it at his bidding. It was a matter for us to settle without the interference of Mr. Gladstone or any Englishman.'



Mr. Gladstone now took instant action. On November 24 he wrote his famous letter to Mr. Morley. I shall quote the most pregnant sentences of the fateful document :

‘ . . . While clinging to the hope of communication from Mr. Parnell to whomsoever addressed, I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. McCarthy with the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that, notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland.

*‘ I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to expand the conclusion I have given above as to add that the continuance I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal party, based as it has been mainly upon the presentation of the Irish cause, almost a nullity.’*<sup>1</sup>

While Mr. Morley was in search of Parnell to show him Mr. Gladstone’s manifesto, the Irish members met at a quarter to one o’clock on Tuesday afternoon, November 25, at Committee Room 15, in the House of Commons, to elect a sessional chairman.<sup>2</sup>

The ‘Freeman’s Journal’ has described how Parnell

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> The constitutional title of the Irish leader was ‘Sessional Chairman’ of the Irish parliamentary party. He was elected at the beginning of each session of Parliament.

was received by his parliamentary colleagues as he entered the room, looking as calm and unconcerned as usual. 'The welcome accorded to the national leader was enthusiastic in the extreme. Loud cheers were given as he entered the room, and much hand-shaking and many assurances of continued allegiance preceded the business of the day. Mr. McCarthy proposed that Mr. Richard Power take the chair. The first business was then the re-election of Mr. Parnell as chairman of the party, which was proposed by Mr. Sexton, seconded by Colonel Nolan, and agreed to amid loud applause. Mr. Parnell thanked the meeting for this further and fresh proof of their confidence in him, and stated that, in response to their unanimous desire, he would continue to discharge the duties of leader.'

'How did Mr. Parnell look when he came to your meeting?' an Irish member was asked by an English Radical. 'Well,' said the Irish member, 'he looked as if we had committed adultery with his wife.'

On Tuesday afternoon, then, the Irish parliamentary party re-elected Mr. Parnell as sessional chairman with every expression of regard and confidence. The moral offence was condoned. The Irish members, endorsing the views previously expressed at the Leinster Hall meeting and by the American delegates, declared unanimously and enthusiastically that, come weal, come woe, they would stand by the man who had again and again led them to victory, affirming, in effect, that his public life should not be cut short by his private transgressions as exposed in the proceedings of the Divorce Court.

'When I left the committee-room,' says Mr. Pierce Mahony, M.P., 'Sir William Harcourt came up to me and said: "You have done a nice thing. You have

re-elected Parnell after Mr. Gladstone's letter." I said: "We have not seen Mr. Gladstone's letter. What do you mean?" Harcourt said: "Why, Mr. Gladstone wrote saying he could not remain leader of the Liberal party if Parnell were re-elected, and you will see the letter in the evening papers."'

In the evening a rumour ran through the Lobby of the House of Commons that Mr. Gladstone had written a letter to Mr. Morley on the crisis. This was followed by a second and graver rumour that that letter had been sent to the Press.

'I was sitting,' says Professor Stuart, 'in the passage leading from the central hall into the Lobby when Sexton rushed up to me and said: "Is it true that Gladstone has written a letter about Parnell, and that it has been sent to the Press?" I replied: "I don't know; I have heard nothing about it." He urged me to try and find out, and I said I certainly would. My recollection about what afterwards happened is not very clear, but I think I first sent someone to the Press Gallery to find out. Afterwards I believe I went to the gallery myself and saw one of the pressmen, and learned that Gladstone had, as Sexton said, written to Morley, and that the letter had actually been given to the Press. I got the letter in "flimsy," and brought it to the Irish members. Then we all went to the Conference-room, where the letter was read. The Irishmen were thrown into great distress, and I felt that I ought not to remain with them, so I came away.'

'The publication of Gladstone's letter was certainly a mistake,' a distinguished Liberal has said to me, 'not the writing it. It was quite right for Mr. Gladstone to put his views before Parnell, but these views ought

not to have been *published*. The publication of them could only have irritated Parnell and suggested English dictation; though I am satisfied Mr. Gladstone never meant to dictate. The letter itself was perfectly proper; it could not have been couched in more suitable language, and I feel that as a private communication Parnell would not have objected to it. He was far too sensible a man for that. The publication was the *sting*. But how did it come to be published? Did Mr. Gladstone authorise its publication? Someone, I admit, has blundered! Who?'

I think I can answer this question. 'Gladstone's letter,' says Mr. William Pitt, of the Press Association, 'was dictated to me by Mr. Arnold Morley<sup>1</sup> in the whips' room in the House of Commons. I went immediately to the Press smoking-room, and began to write it out from my shorthand notes. When I had sent away a good part of it to the Press Association Office in Wine Office Court, Professor Stuart came up and asked me to stop its publication. I asked him for his authority, and said I was publishing it on the authority of the chief Liberal whip. I asked Professor Stuart to get Mr. Gladstone's authority to stop the publication. He then went away, and I saw him no more. As a matter of fact, at the time that Professor Stuart intervened part of the letter was probably in some of the newspaper offices, and it was then scarcely possible to stop the publication.'<sup>2</sup>

'After the publication of the letter,' says Mr. Pierce Mahony, 'a number of us wrote a letter to Parnell saying that we thought it might be judicious for him to retire for a time, but that whatever he did we would

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morley was chief Liberal whip.

<sup>2</sup> Communicated to Mr. Tuohy, of the *Freeman's Journal*.

stick by him. He then saw us all at the Westminster Palace Hotel. Justin McCarthy was present. Parnell said: "I will retire if Gladstone says in writing that he will give the Irish Parliament control of the police and of the land, unless the English Parliament settles it first. Now, I don't want him to write that letter to me; let him write it to Justin McCarthy." And then he turned to Justin and said, with a grim smile, "And Justin, when you get the letter, I advise you to put it in a glass case."

The simple truth is that the letter was published by the express orders of Mr. Gladstone, given to Mr. John Morley and conveyed by him to Mr. Arnold Morley. It was the opinion of many Liberals then, and it is the opinion of many Liberals still, that the publication of the letter—published with indecent haste—was a gross blunder, calculated to exasperate the situation and increase the difficulties of a peaceful settlement. Whatever might have been Mr. Gladstone's intentions, it was received as an *ultimatum* throughout the three kingdoms, and as an *ultimatum* was resented and defied by the proud, unbending Irish Chief. That letter drove every Irish Nationalist who had not been demoralised by agrarianism, or Liberalism, to the side of Parnell.

'To me,' an Irish Nationalist said, 'the question now was one between an Englishman and an Irishman, and of course I flung myself upon the side of my own countryman. It did not matter a rush to me whether he was right or wrong the moment that issue was raised.'

'I did not trouble myself much about the matter, said an old Fenian leader, 'until the Grand Old Man interfered. Of course the divorce business was

horrible, but was it worse than all that had been going on for the past ten years—outrages, murders, boycotting, the Plan of Campaign, New Tipperary, and everything that was criminal and idiotic?—and yet these Liberals surrendered to this kind of thing, practically condoned the whole business, and were coming in shoals to Ireland, encouraging every madcap in the country in every immoral and insane plan he could think of—and then suddenly they get a fit of virtue over this divorce affair. These English are the most extraordinary people in the world. You never can make out what is virtue or what is not virtue with them, except mainly that virtue is always on their side, whatever their side is. Well, the divorce case was nothing to me. It was for the Grand Young Man to get out of his scrape as well as he could. I was not going to trouble my head about him. But when the Grand Old Man interfered, that gave a new aspect to the affair. It then became a question of submitting to the dictation of an Englishman, and for the first time I resolved to support Parnell.'

On the morning of November 26 I read Mr. Gladstone's letter in the 'Standard.' I felt at once that it would cause a split in the ranks of the Parliamentarians, and I hastened to the Irish Press Agency to hear the worst. There I soon learned that my anticipations were only too well founded. I met a prominent member of the parliamentary party, who was sorely distressed at the new development. I said: 'Will this letter of Mr. Gladstone's make any difference to your people?' He answered, with a melancholy smile, 'I should think it will.'

I said: 'Do you mean that you will give up Parnell because Mr. Gladstone has written this letter?'

*Irish member.* 'I don't know what will be done until the party meets to-day. But the letter was a shock to our people last night.'

'Well, what do your people now say?'

*Irish member.* 'They say that Gladstone will retire from the leadership of the Liberal party if Parnell does not retire from the leadership of the Irish party.'

'As a matter of fact, does Gladstone say so much?' [and I quoted the sentence I have put in italics in Mr. Gladstone's letter].

*Irish member.* 'Oh, he *means* that. Of course he never says anything clearly. But every Irish member believes that the meaning of the letter is what I say.'

'And you are going to fling Parnell overboard because Mr. Gladstone tells you?'

*Irish member.* 'Well, for myself I will stand by Parnell, but let me put the view of many of our men to you. We have been telling the Irish people to trust in Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. We have said that when the Liberals come back to office they will restore the evicted tenants, pass a new Land Act, and grant Home Rule. Now, if we go back, and say we have broken with the Liberal party, we have broken with Mr. Gladstone, what will the people say to us? That is the fix we are in.'

I said: 'Let me put the case in another way to you. You have all condoned Parnell's moral offence; you have had your Leinster Hall meeting, your cables from the American delegates, the meeting of the parliamentary party, the enthusiastic re-election of Parnell as leader. And now, in an instant, at the bidding of an Englishman, you eat your own words and you abandon your own leader! What do you think every self-respecting man in the world will say of you when you have done this

thing? Why, that you are cowards, that you have no self-reliance, that you do not deserve freedom. I think I am better affected towards Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party than any of you. But Parnell is of more importance to Ireland than Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party, and for that matter than the Irish party too, all put together. Let him go, and Home Rule will go with him for this generation.'

*Irish member.* 'Well, come to-morrow and we will know more.'

I called on the morrow. I had seen by the morning papers that the Irish party had met to reconsider the question of Parnell's leadership, but had adjourned without coming to any definite decision.

'Well,' I said to my friend at the agency, 'why did you not settle the question yesterday?' 'Because,' he answered, 'if we had settled the question Parnell would no longer be leader of the Irish party. We [Parnellites] forced an adjournment to get time. It is a bad business, and you may take it from me now Parnell is going to be beaten.'

This is what actually happened at the meeting of the party on the 26th. When the party had been some time in the room Parnell entered, and went straight to the chair, looking calm, unconcerned, imperious. Mr. Barry immediately rose and asked whether in the light of Mr. Gladstone's letter it would not be the wisest course for Mr. Parnell to retire for a period from the leadership of the party.

Dr. Commins felt that expediency demanded that Parnell should adopt this course, at any rate for a time.

Mr. Justin McCarthy said that, having read Mr. Gladstone's letter, he had come to the conclusion that



the situation had undergone a material change since the previous day, and ought now to be reconsidered.

Mr. Sexton took the same view, suggesting that every member of the party should be asked his opinion on the question.

Colonel Nolan urged Parnell to stand to his guns and to tolerate the dictation of no English party leader.

Mr. Lane and Mr. Sheehy said that in the interest of the tenants on the Smith-Barry and Ponsonby estate Parnell ought to retire. Finally, it was agreed that the meeting should adjourn until Monday, December 1.

Parnell sat silently all the time, listening attentively but speaking not a word. Then he left the chair and the room.

What effect had Mr. Gladstone's manifesto on the American delegates? On Mr. T. D. Sullivan it had little effect. He had already taken his stand on moral grounds, and there he remained. On Mr. Harrington it had no effect. He had decided to support Parnell on political grounds, and he was not to be blown from his position by the breath of any Englishman. But Mr. Dillon, Mr. William O'Brien, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor determined on the instant to abandon the Irish Chief at the bidding of the Liberal leader. 'Of course we must obey' one of the delegates wired to another on the appearance of the Liberal *ultimatum*. Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. T. P. O'Connor 'obeyed.' Parnell suspected that Mr. Gladstone's letter would produce the same effect on the American delegates as it had produced on his other parliamentary colleagues, and accordingly he cabled to Mr. Dillon and to Mr. O'Brien urging them to take no steps until they had read a manifesto, which he would issue immediately.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## AT BAY

ON Friday night, November 28, a dramatic scene took place at the apartments of an Irish member, Dr. Fitzgerald, in Chester Place, near Victoria Station. Parnell summoned a number of his colleagues on whom he felt he could rely to meet him at Dr. Fitzgerald's quarters; among others, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. J. J. O'Kelly, Mr. Leamy, Colonel Nolan, came. It was about ten o'clock at night. They found Parnell seated at a table with many sheets of manuscript before him. 'Well,' he said, as his friends gathered around him, 'if we go down we shall go down with our flag flying. I have written a paper which I shall send to the Press to-night. Before sending it I wish to read it to you.' Then, after a pause, he added, 'I think Justin McCarthy ought to be here. He ought to know that I am doing this. Let someone go for him.'

Mr. William Redmond then went for Mr. McCarthy, who soon arrived. On his taking a seat Parnell said: 'I have written a public letter, McCarthy, which I think you ought to hear before it goes to the Press,' and without further words he read slowly and deliberately, while all listened in dead silence.

*'To the People of Ireland*

'The integrity and independence of a section of the Irish parliamentary party having been sapped and destroyed<sup>1</sup> by the wirepullers of the English Liberal party, it has become necessary for me, as the leader of the Irish nation, to take counsel with you, and, having given you the knowledge which is in my possession, to ask your judgment upon a matter which now solely devolves upon you to decide.

'The letter of Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Morley, written for the purpose of influencing the decision of the Irish party in the choice of their leader, and claiming for the Liberal party and their leaders the right of veto upon that choice, is the immediate cause of this address to you, to remind you and your parliamentary representatives that Ireland considers the independence of her party as her only safeguard within the constitution, and above and beyond all other considerations whatever. The threat in that letter, repeated so insolently on many English platforms and in numerous British newspapers, that unless Ireland concedes this right of veto to England she will indefinitely postpone her chances of obtaining Home Rule, compels me, while not for one moment admitting the slightest probability of such loss, to put before you information which until now, so far as my colleagues are concerned, has been solely in my possession, and which will enable you to understand the measure of the loss with which you are threatened unless you consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction.

<sup>1</sup> On December 3, at the meeting of the Irish party, Mr. Parnell declared that this sentence should read '*apparently* sapped and undermined.'

‘In November of last year, in response to a repeated and long-standing request, I visited Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden, and received the details of the intended proposals of himself and his colleagues of the late Liberal Cabinet with regard to Home Rule, in the event of the next general election favouring the Liberal party.

‘It is unnecessary for me to do more at present than to direct your attention to certain points of these details, which will be generally recognised as embracing elements vital for your information and the formation of your judgment. These vital points of difficulty may be suitably arranged and considered under the following heads :

‘(1) The retention of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament.

‘(2) The settlement of the land or agrarian difficulty in Ireland.

‘(3) The control of the Irish constabulary.

‘(4) The appointment of the judiciary (including judges of the supreme court, county court judges, and resident magistrates).

‘Upon the subject of the retention of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament Mr. Gladstone told me that the opinion, and the unanimous opinion, of his colleagues and himself, recently arrived at after most mature consideration of alternative proposals, was that, in order to conciliate English public opinion, it would be necessary to reduce the Irish representation from 103 to 32.

‘Upon the settlement of the land it was held that this was one of the questions which must be regarded as questions reserved from the control of the Irish Legislature, but, at the same time, Mr. Gladstone

intimated that, while he would renew his attempt to settle the matter by Imperial legislation on the lines of the Land Purchase Bill of 1886, he would not undertake to put any pressure upon his own side or insist upon their adopting his views—in other and shorter words, that the Irish Legislature was not to be given the power of solving the agrarian difficulty, and that the Imperial Parliament would not.

‘With regard to the control of the Irish constabulary, it was stated by Mr. Gladstone that, having regard to the necessity for conciliating English public opinion, he and his colleagues felt that it would be necessary to leave this force and the appointment of its officers under the control of the Imperial authority for an indefinite period, while the funds for its maintenance, payment, and equipment would be compulsorily provided out of Irish resources.

‘The period of ten or twelve years was suggested as the limit of time during which the appointment of judges, resident magistrates, &c., should be retained in the hands of the Imperial authority.

‘I have now given a short account of what I gathered of Mr. Gladstone’s views and those of his colleagues during two hours’ conversation at Hawarden—a conversation which, I am bound to admit, was mainly monopolised by Mr. Gladstone—and pass to my own expressions of opinion upon these communications, which represent my views then and now.

‘And, first, with regard to the retention of the Irish members, the position I have always adopted, and then represented, is that, with the concession of full powers to the Irish Legislature equivalent to those enjoyed by a State of the American Union, the number and position of the members so retained would become a

question of Imperial concern, and not of pressing or immediate importance for the interests of Ireland. But that with the important and all-engrossing subjects of agrarian reform, constabulary control, and judiciary appointments left either under Imperial control or totally unprovided for, it would be the height of madness for any Irish leader to imitate Grattan's example and consent to disband the army which had cleared the way to victory.

'I further undertook to use every legitimate influence to reconcile Irish public opinion to a gradual coming into force of the new privileges, and to the postponements necessary for English opinion with regard to constabulary control and judicial appointments, but strongly dissented from the proposed reduction of members during the interval of probation. I pointed to the absence of any suitable prospect of land settlement by either Parliament as constituting an overwhelming drag upon the prospects of permanent peace and prosperity in Ireland.

'At the conclusion of the interview I was informed that Mr. Gladstone and all his colleagues were entirely agreed that, pending the General Election, silence should be absolutely preserved with regard to any points of difference on the question of the retention of the Irish members.

'I have dwelt at some length upon these subjects, but not, I think, disproportionately to their importance. Let me say, in addition, that, if and when full powers are conceded to Ireland over her own domestic affairs, the integrity, number, and independence of the Irish party will be a matter of no importance; but until this ideal is reached it is your duty and mine to hold fast every safeguard.

‘I need not say that the questions—the vital and important questions—of the retention of the Irish members, on the one hand, and the indefinite delay of full powers to the Irish Legislature on the other, gave me great concern. The absence of any provision for the settlement of the agrarian question, of any policy on the part of the Liberal leaders, filled me with concern and apprehension. On the introduction of the Land Purchase Bill by the Government at the commencement of last session, Mr. Morley communicated with me as to the course to be adopted. Having regard to the avowed absence of any policy on the part of the Liberal leaders and party with regard to the matter of the land, I strongly advised Mr. Morley against any direct challenge of the principle of State-aided land purchase, and, finding that the fears and alarms of the English taxpayer to State aid by the hypothecation of grants for local purposes in Ireland as a counter-guarantee had been assuaged, that a hopeless struggle should not be maintained, and that we should direct our sole efforts on the second reading of the Bill to the assertion of the principle of local control. In this I am bound to say Mr. Morley entirely agreed with me, but he was at the same time much hampered—and expressed his sense of his position—in that direction by the attitude of the extreme section of his party, led by Mr. Labouchere. And in a subsequent interview he impressed me with the necessity of meeting the second reading of the Bill with a direct negative, and asked me to undertake the motion. I agreed to this, but only on the condition that I was not to attack the principle of the measure, but to confine myself to a criticism of its details. I think this was false strategy, but it was strategy adopted out of regard to English

prejudices and Radical peculiarities. I did the best that was possible under the circumstances, and the several days' debate on the second reading contrasts favourably with Mr. Labouchere's recent and abortive attempt to interpose a direct negative to the first reading of a similar Bill yesterday.

'Time went on. The Government allowed their attention to be distracted from the question of land purchase by the Bill for compensating English publicans, and the agrarian difficulty in Ireland was again relegated to the future of another session. Just before the commencement of this session I was again favoured with another interview with Mr. Morley. I impressed upon him the policy of the oblique method of procedure in reference to land purchase, and the necessity and importance of providing for the question of local control and of a limitation in the application of the funds. He agreed with me, and I offered to move, on the first reading of the Bill, an amendment in favour of this local control, advising that, if this were rejected, it might be left to the Radicals on the second reading to oppose the principle of the measure. This appeared to be a proper course, and I left Mr. Morley under the impression that this would fall to my duty.

'But in addition he made me a remarkable proposal, referring to the probable approaching victory of the Liberal party at the polls. He suggested some considerations as to the future of the Irish party. He asked me whether I would be willing to assume the office of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, or to allow another member of my party to take the position. He also put before me the desirability of filling one of the law offices of the Crown in



Ireland by a legal member of my party. I told him, amazed as I was at the proposal, that I could not agree to forfeit in any way the independence of the party or any of its members; that the Irish people had trusted me in this movement because they believed that the declaration I had made to them at Cork in 1880 was a true one and represented my convictions, and that I would on no account depart from it. I considered that, after the declarations we have repeatedly made, the proposal of Mr. Morley, that we should allow ourselves to be absorbed into English politics, was one based upon an entire misconception of our position with regard to the Irish constituencies and of the pledges which we had given.

‘In conclusion, he directed my attention to the Plan of Campaign estates. He said that it would be impossible for the Liberal party when they attained power to do anything for these evicted tenants by direct action; that it would be also impossible for the Irish Parliament, under the powers conferred, to do anything for them, and, flinging up his hands with a gesture of despair, he exclaimed: “Having been to Tipperary, I do not know what to propose in regard to the matter.” I told him that this question was a limited one, and that I did not see that he need allow himself to be hampered by its future consideration; that, being limited, funds would be available from America and elsewhere for the support of those tenants as long as might be necessary; that, of course, I understood it was a difficulty, but that it was a limited one, and should not be allowed to interfere with the general interests of the country.

‘I allude to this matter only because within the last few days a strong argument in many minds for my expulsion has been that, unless the Liberals come into

power at the next general election, the Plan of Campaign tenants will suffer. As I have shown, the Liberals propose to do nothing for the Plan of Campaign tenants by direct action when they do come into power, but I am entitled to ask that the existence of these tenants, whom I have supported in every way in the past, and whom I shall continue to support in the future, shall not constitute a reason for my expulsion from Irish politics. I have repeatedly pledged myself to stand by these evicted tenants and that they shall not be allowed to suffer, and I believe that the Irish people throughout the world will support me in this policy.

‘Sixteen years ago I conceived the idea of an Irish parliamentary party independent of all English parties. Ten years ago I was elected the leader of an independent Irish parliamentary party. During these ten years that party has remained independent, and because of its independence it has forced upon the English people the necessity of granting Home Rule to Ireland. I believe that party will obtain Home Rule only provided it remains independent of any English party.

‘I do not believe that any action of the Irish people in supporting me will endanger the Home Rule cause, or postpone the establishment of an Irish Parliament; but even if the danger with which we are threatened by the Liberal party of to-day were to be realised, I believe that the Irish people throughout the world would agree with me that postponement would be preferable to a compromise of our national rights by the acceptance of a measure which would not realise the aspirations of our race.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley denied the accuracy of Parnell's account of the interviews with them.

'That,' said Parnell, throwing the manuscript on the table, 'is what I have written.'

Then there was a pause. For a minute no one spoke; every man realised the gravity of the situation, all looked at Mr. Justin McCarthy.

'Parnell,' said Mr. McCarthy, in a voice trembling with anxiety and emotion, 'I disapprove of every word in that manifesto.'

'I am quite ready,' said Parnell, 'to consider any suggestions that any of you may make. What do you object to?'

Mr. McCarthy answered: 'I object to everything in it, Parnell.'

'Point out something,' urged the Chief.

'It's all objectionable, Parnell,' said Mr. McCarthy; 'it is offensive to our English allies.'

'Point out what you consider offensive,' still urged Parnell.

'Well,' said Mr. McCarthy, 'take the words "English wolves."'

'Then,' said Parnell, 'I will not change them. Whatever goes out, these words shall not go out.'

'I do not think, Parnell,' continued Mr. McCarthy, 'that there is much use in discussing the matter. You have made up your mind. You have asked me for my opinion. I have given it to you. I will say no more.'

It was now twelve o'clock, and the meeting broke up.

'I drove Justin home in a cab,' says Mr. William Redmond. 'He was very downcast, and remained in deep reverie all the time. I felt for him, because I believed his heart was with us. He spoke not a word till we got near his house, then suddenly woke up, and

clutching his fist and speaking with an energy that astonished me, said : " And what harm, but I am in the same boat with that d——d cad ——" naming one of the Irish members who had deserted Parnell.'

On Saturday morning, November 29, Parnell's manifesto appeared in all the papers. Its publication may have been a mistake, but it was at least provoked by the publication of Mr. Gladstone's manifesto, a still greater mistake. The Liberal leader had thrown down the gage of battle. The Irish leader took it up. War was now declared, and on Monday, December 1, the first battle was fought in Committee Room 15.

On the previous day Mr. Dillon, Mr. William O'Brien, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor made their solemn recantation, threw Parnell over, and ranged themselves on the side of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. This recantation, which took the form of a public manifesto, was signed by all the American delegates except Mr. Harrington.

One can well conceive how that quaint humorist, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, must have smiled as he saw Mr. Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien, who only a few days before had denounced him for deserting Parnell, put their hands to the document.

Before the decks are cleared for action let us examine the positions of the combatants.

### *The Liberal Party*

It would be mockery to pretend that the Liberal leaders were influenced by moral considerations in their hostility to the Irish leader. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and his friends were unquestionably influenced by moral considerations, and, whether one

agrees or disagrees with them, they are certainly entitled to the respect due to all men who, regardless of results, act according to the dictates of conscience. But the Liberal leaders—not unnaturally—thought only of the political consequences of Parnell's moral transgression. 'Can we win the General Election if Parnell remains leader of the Irish party?' That was the question—the sole question—they asked.

Despite the warning note struck by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who really must be regarded as the English hero of the struggle, the Liberal leaders believed at first that Parnell would not have to be sacrificed, but gradually they began to waver. Some days before the divorce case came on Mr. Morley and Parnell dined at the Hôtel Métropole at Brighton. Mr. Morley introduced the subject of the divorce case. He said (substantially): 'Suppose this case goes against you, which is possible, what will you do?' Parnell (who, we may assume, did not want to talk about the matter to Mr. Morley or to anyone else) said: 'Depend upon it that the proceedings in the Divorce Court will not oblige me to make any change in my position.' Mr. Morley understood by this answer that Parnell believed he would pass scatheless through the court. Parnell's own statement of his meaning was that he would hold his ground whatever should betide. 'Mr. Morley,' Mr. Campbell<sup>1</sup> subsequently said to me, 'knew right well a week before the case came on that the Chief would not retire, no matter what happened. The Chief told him so.'

On coming back to London Mr. Morley met a Liberal who has given me this account of the interview. 'Mr. Morley told me he had just seen Parnell

<sup>1</sup> Parnell's secretary.

in Brighton—"a most remarkable man, a most extraordinary man," he said. "But what about this divorce case?" I asked. "Parnell will come off all right; he has assured me so," he replied. "But," I said, "suppose he does not come off all right. Suppose he is found guilty of adultery, as we all believe he is, will he retire?" "He will not," said Mr. Morley. "He will remain where he is, and he is quite right." "Well," I said, "if he remains you must be prepared to face the Nonconformists; they won't stand it."

It is but just to Mr. Morley to say that he was personally animated by the friendliest feeling towards the Irish leader. Even after the divorce proceedings he was not without hope that the storm might yet be weathered. This hope was dispelled at the Sheffield meeting. There he met the Nonconformists, and quickly came to the conclusion that the only course open to the Liberal leader in the interest of the Liberal party was to throw Parnell to the lions.

I asked a distinguished Tory to give me his view of the crisis, and I set out here what he said because, though coming from what might be regarded as a prejudiced source, I believe his statement is a fairly accurate summing up of the situation as far as the Liberal leaders were concerned. He said: 'I cannot conceive why the Irish gave up Parnell. He was everything to them. He was the centre of the whole enterprise, and the idea that things could go on after his overthrow exactly as they went on before seems to me to be absolutely fatuous. I cannot think even now that Gladstone wished Parnell to go; he must have known too much of the man and too much of the movement. I think Gladstone was forced into the pit. You remember the meeting at Sheffield—what do they call

it? The Federation—yes. That was the beginning. Morley and Harcourt were there. The Nonconformist parsons got at them, frightened them, and then they came up to London, saw Gladstone, and persuaded him to the course he took. The parsons frightened them, and they frightened Gladstone. Cowardice—sheer cowardice—was the cause of Parnell's overthrow.'

What Mr. Gladstone did, he did, first and foremost, in the best interests, or what he believed to be the best interests, of the Liberal party. But I should be doing him scant justice were I to conceal the fact that, in his mind, the interests of Liberalism and the interests of Ireland were inseparable.

He had given hostages to fortune on the question of Home Rule. 'He will pull the Liberal party into Home Rule,' a British journalist said to me in the winter of 1885, 'or he will pull them to pieces.' It matters not why Mr. Gladstone became a Home Ruler, it matters not that he was drawn into the movement by the matchless strategy, the commanding genius, of Parnell. Let the truth be spoken. No Irish Nationalist was more determined to establish a Parliament in Ireland than was the Liberal leader on that fatal 24th of November when, in a state of panic, he committed the irreparable blunder of sending his letter to Mr. Morley to the Press, and thus in an instant cutting off all chance of peace. Dominated for the moment by Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley—both scared by the Sheffield irreconcilables, of whom I say not a word—he looked upon the expulsion of Parnell from the command of the Irish party as necessary for the success of the Home Rule cause. It was a mad thought, but it was a sincere thought.

*The Anti-Parnellites*

The Anti-Parnellites were no more influenced by moral considerations than the Liberal leaders; with both the question was one of political expediency pure and simple.

‘The divorce case,’ says Mr. Harrington, ‘produced no effect upon us in America. It was Gladstone’s letter that did the thing. It was Gladstone that turned the delegates round.’

‘If Parnell remains Gladstone will go, if Gladstone goes we will lose the General Election, and if the General Election is lost there will be an end to Home Rule in our time.’

This was the process of reasoning used by the Anti-Parnellites. I will relate one anecdote to show how much the Parliamentarians were dominated by Mr. Gladstone.

A Parnellite member raised the question that Mr. Gladstone did not say definitely that he would go if Parnell remained—that, in fact, his letter was quite ambiguous on the point. This argument produced an effect on the waverers, whereupon an Anti-Parnellite wrote to Mr. Morley saying that the vagueness of Mr. Gladstone’s language left some doubt in the minds of the Irish members as to whether he really meant to retire in the event of Parnell refusing to give way, and suggesting that Mr. Morley should see Mr. Gladstone and get a clear and explicit statement from him. Mr. Morley saw Mr. Gladstone, and then wrote to the Anti-Parnellite, saying, in effect: ‘Mr. Gladstone feels that he cannot usefully add anything to what he has already written.’ The Irish members, however, were given clearly to understand by the Liberal leaders



that Mr. Gladstone would go if Parnell remained. 'Be quite sure,' Mr. Morley himself said to me, 'that Mr. Gladstone will retire if Parnell does not. Let your friends understand that.' It was this threat that brought the majority of the Irish members to their knees. But let it be said in all truth that in going on their knees they believed they were doing the best for Ireland. To break with Mr. Gladstone, to break with the Liberals, to break with the English democracy, seemed to them sheer madness; therefore they also joined in the cry, 'To the Lions.'

### *The Parnellites*

The Parnellites may be divided into three classes.

1. There were those who supported Parnell purely on personal grounds—men who for twelve years had fought by his side, had suffered and conquered under his command. The recollections of past struggles rushed upon their minds, they thought of the trials and persecutions he had endured, of the defeats and insults he had borne, of the victories he had achieved. They remembered how all England had conspired against him, and how he had triumphed over all England. They felt bound to him by ties of affection, and of comradeship. Were they to abandon him in an hour of trouble at the bidding of another man? 'I will go into the desert again with Parnell' one of these Parnellite stalwarts said to me. 'Was it not he who brought us out of the desert, who brought us within sight of the Promised Land?'

Another of them, Mr. William Redmond, wrote to the Chief saying that, come what might, he would remain faithful to the leader of his race.

Parnell seems to have been moved by the devotion

of his ardent young follower, and there is, I think, a touch of tenderness in his reply :

*Parnell to Mr. William Redmond*

‘MY DEAR WILLIE,—Thanks very much for your kind letter, which is most consoling and encouraging. It did not require this fresh proof of your friendship to convince me that I have always justly relied upon you as one of the most single-minded and attached of my colleagues.

‘Yours very sincerely,

‘CHARLES S. PARNELL.’

Outside the circle of Parnell’s parliamentary retainers he was beloved by Irishmen and Irishwomen, many of whom, perhaps, had never seen him, but to all of whom his name was a household word. ‘When I was leaving my hotel in New York,’ says Mr. Harrington, ‘on my way home to join Parnell at Kilkenny, the servants—almost all Irish boys and girls—gathered in the hall, or on the stairs, or in the passages, and as I came away all cried out, in voices broken with emotion : “Mr. Harrington, don’t desert him,” “Don’t give him up.”’

The hearts of these Irish boys and girls had gone out to Parnell because he had stood in the breach for Ireland. He had sinned. His own people, strong in the possession of those domestic virtues for which their country is famous, had pardoned the sin because the sinner had served, and suffered for the nation. Was he now to be thrown to the ‘English wolves’ because an Englishman forsooth had cast the first stone?

2. There were those who supported Parnell on grounds of political expediency. ‘We are told,’ they

said, 'that if Parnell remains Mr. Gladstone will go. Then let him go. If the issue be, Parnell without the Liberal alliance, or the Liberal alliance without Parnell, we accept the issue. We stand by our own leader. But Mr. Gladstone does not say he will go. His actual words are: "The continuance of Parnell's leadership would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal party almost a nullity." This may be Gladstone's reason for going. We believe it is Gladstone's reason for staying. Will Mr. Gladstone tell the world that he believes Home Rule to be just and necessary, but that he will abandon it because the Irish leader has broken the sixth commandment? Why, on Mr. Gladstone's own showing, the Land League broke almost all the Ten Commandments, but the fact did not prevent him from carrying the Land Act of 1881, and from practically entering into an offensive and defensive alliance with the League. Mr. Gladstone has divided the Liberal party, has risked his reputation as a statesman, in adopting the Home Rule cause. Is he going to abandon that cause, is he going to forsake a principle founded on justice, and for which he has staked his whole political career—for history will judge him in the end by his Irish policy—because the leader of the Irish party has committed adultery? Is Home Rule to be decided, not on its merits, but according to the domestic life of the Home Rule leader. But if the penalty of fidelity to Parnell mean the loss of Mr. Gladstone, so be it. If we have to fight the English Liberals once more, we accept the responsibility. Parnell brought them to their bearings before. He can bring them to their bearings again. Mr. Gladstone is now, we heartily believe, a sincere Home Ruler. But who made him so? He did all in his power to crush the Irish party. He

passed the Coercion Act of 1881. He flung a thousand Irish Nationalists into gaol without trial. He passed the Coercion Act of 1882. He upheld the iron rule of Lord Spencer from 1882 to 1885. In 1885 he asked the electors of Great Britain for a majority to make him independent of the Irish vote. At the end of the election he surrendered. Why? Because Parnell was able to plant his heel on the neck of the Liberal party. ✓

3. Lastly, there were Parnellites who stood on national grounds pure and simple. 'What is the issue?' they asked. 'The Irish members, encouraged by popular demonstrations in Ireland, have, in defiance of the proceedings in the Divorce Court, unanimously re-elected Parnell. Then Mr. Gladstone steps in and practically calls upon them to reverse their judgment. And they, within twelve hours of the making of that judgment, wheel around and obey him. They acknowledge the right of an Englishman to revise their decision, they submit to English dictation. Is this conduct worthy of any body of men calling themselves self-respecting and self-reliant Irish Nationalists? Had they, in the first instance, refused to re-elect Parnell in consequence of his relations with Mrs. O'Shea, no one could have objected to their action on national grounds. But to have re-elected him in spite of the verdict in the Divorce Court, and then to fling him over in obedience to the decree of an English party leader, is a humiliating submission to foreign control.' ✓

One day I met a Nonconformist friend, and we discussed the situation. I am bound to say that he spoke sympathetically of Parnell, and, I am sure, felt sincerely sorry for what had happened. 'You know,' he said, 'if Gladstone had done this thing he would have had to go.' I replied: 'Possibly. But let

me put this case to you. Suppose Gladstone had done this thing, and had afterwards been re-elected leader of the Liberal party, and that then Parnell intervened and said he must go—would you in such circumstances force him to go?' 'No,' answered my friend energetically, 'we certainly would not.'

The spirit which animated my Nonconformist friend was the spirit which animated the Irish Nationalists of whom I am now speaking. 'We are told,' they said, 'that we cannot succeed without an English alliance. Why, it is notorious that all which Ireland has obtained from England has been obtained not by a policy of alliance, but by a policy of defiance. Was O'Connell in alliance with the Tories when he wrung emancipation from a reluctant Minister? Were the Fenians in alliance with the Liberals when the Church was disestablished and the Land Act of 1870 passed? Was Parnell in alliance with the Liberals when the Land Act of 1881 became law? Was he in alliance with the Tories when the Land Act of 1885 took its place in the statute-book? Was he in alliance with the Liberals when Mr. Gladstone broke the Liberal tradition and flung himself into the ranks of the Home Rulers? Was he in alliance with the Tories when Lord Salisbury broke the Tory tradition and his own pledges and forced the Land Act of 1887 through Parliament? The whole history of the relations between England and Ireland shows that an Irish policy to be successful must be a policy of self-reliance.'

Having examined the positions of the combatants, we shall now witness the combat. Mr. Abraham (Anti-Parnellite) began the operations in Committee

Room 15 by moving 'that Mr. Parnell's tenure of the chairmanship of this party is hereby terminated.'

Parnell at once ruled this resolution out of order. The motion before the party on Wednesday, December 26, was, he pointed out, 'that a full meeting of the party be held on Friday to give Mr. Parnell an opportunity to reconsider his position.' That motion still held the field, and could not be withdrawn unless by the unanimous consent of the meeting. Mr. Abraham did not move an amendment. He moved a substantive resolution, which must wait until the resolution in possession was disposed of. Mr. Abraham's resolution having thus gone by the board, Colonel Nolan (Parnellite) moved 'that the party should meet in Dublin and settle the question there.' The reason of this resolution, on which the combatants now joined issue, was obvious. Parnell wished to get his foes under the pressure of Irish opinion, to draw them away from what he regarded as the fatal influence of the House of Commons. After an animated discussion this resolution was defeated by forty-four to twenty-nine votes.

Beaten on Colonel Nolan's resolution, Parnell now determined to make the discussion centre round Mr. Gladstone's position instead of his own. This was the manoeuvre of a master, and he carried it out with Napoleonic address and genius. Mr. Gladstone had disputed the accuracy of the statements made in Parnell's manifesto touching the proposed changes relating to the control of the constabulary and the settlement of the land question. The result was that the attention of the meeting, instead of being concentrated on the question of Parnell's leadership, was suddenly directed to the dispute between Mr. Gladstone and Parnell as to what

the former had said anent the provisions of the next Home Rule Bill. 'Why waste time,' said Parnell in effect, 'in discussing this question now? Go to Mr. Gladstone and get a definite statement from him on the point.' 'When,' said Mr. Redmond, 'we are asked to sell our leader to preserve the English alliance, it seems to me that we are bound to inquire what we are getting for the price we are paying.' 'Don't sell me for nothing,' interrupted Parnell. 'If you get my value you may change me to-morrow.' The reasonableness of this remark struck every man in the room. It might have been a mere tactical move on Parnell's part, but it was thoroughly in keeping with the shrewdness and common-sense which he had ever shown in leading the party. ✓

On December 3 Mr. Clancy moved 'that the whips of the party be instructed to obtain from Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, and Sir William Harcourt definite information on the vital questions of the constabulary and the land.' Parnell had not yet arrived when this resolution was moved. In his absence Mr. Clancy said: 'I have authority for stating that if the assurances are given after the manner suggested in this resolution, Mr. Parnell will retire.' The moment Mr. Clancy had made this statement Parnell entered the room and took his place in the chair. Mr. Healy sprang in an instant to his feet, and, speaking with much emotion, said:

'I wish to make a personal declaration in your regard, Mr. Parnell. I wish to say that if you feel able to meet the party on these points my voice will be the first on the very earliest moment possible consistent with the liberties of my country to call you back to your proper place as leader of the Irish race.'

Mr. Sexton followed. He said: 'I wish also to say that I never for a moment abandoned the hope that, no matter what might happen now, a day would come when you would be leader of the Irish nation in a Legislature where none but Irish opinion would influence your position.' So thought, so felt, the whole Anti-Parnellite party. But the Liberals simply regarded the Anti-Parnellites as a lot of simpletons to allow themselves to be out-manceuvred by this clever device; and as the Anti-Parnellites sank lower and lower in Liberal opinion after this incident of the struggle, the genius of the Chief shone brighter than ever, even in the eyes of his foes.

'What do Healy and Sexton mean,' a distinguished Liberal said to me, 'by accepting Clancy's proposal? Do they think we are fools? Do they imagine that Mr. Gladstone is going at this moment to tell the world what his next Home Rule Bill will be?' What the Irish members considered a fair proposal the Liberals regarded as a *deus ex machinâ*.

The upshot of Mr. Clancy's motion (which was subjected to much discussion and to some modification) was that the party unanimously agreed that Mr. Leamy, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Healy, and Mr. John Redmond should seek an interview with Mr. Gladstone to learn his views on '(1) the settlement of the land question; (2) on the control of the constabulary force in the event of the establishment of an Irish Parliament.'<sup>1</sup> 'Gentlemen,' said Parnell, 'it is for you to act in this matter. You are dealing with a man who is an unrivalled sophist. You

<sup>1</sup> It was originally agreed, on Parnell's suggestion, that the delegates should wait on Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Morley (and see them all together); but the Liberal leaders having insisted that Mr. Gladstone should alone deal with the subject, it was finally left in his hands.



are dealing with a man to whom it is as impossible to give a direct answer to a plain and simple question as it is for me impossible to give an indirect answer to a plain and simple question. You are dealing with a man who is capable of appealing to the constituencies for a majority which would make him independent of the Irish party. And if I surrender to him, if I give up my position to him—if you throw me to him, I say, gentlemen, that it is your bounden duty to see that you secure value for the sacrifice. How can you secure this value? You can secure this value by making up your minds as to what these provisions in the next Home Rule Bill should be.'

The Liberal leaders were perplexed and irritated at the success of Parnell's manœuvre. It looked as if he might yet snatch the Anti-Parnellites out of the hands of Mr. Gladstone, and even turn the flank of the grand old parliamentary general. The majority of the Irish members had met in Committee Room 15 to dismiss Parnell from the leadership of the Irish parliamentary party, because he had committed adultery with Mrs. O'Shea; and now here they were flinging the divorce proceedings on one side, and uniting with the Parnellites in demanding assurances from Mr. Gladstone on the next Home Rule Bill. Instead of being dismissed, Parnell had actually re-united the whole Irish party for the moment, and had, in the old form, ordered them to advance upon the common enemy. Assuredly, in all justice and fairness, no reasonable Parnellite could be astonished, after this unexpected development, that Mr. Morley should have thrown his hands to heaven in despair, and that Sir William Harcourt should have longed once more to cultivate his own fireside. The wishes of the Irish members as expressed in the fore-

going resolution were conveyed to Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley, and Sir William Harcourt.

Mr. Gladstone received the delegates (at 1 Carlton Gardens, the residence of Mr., now Lord Rendel) with icy politeness, listened unmoved to Mr. Sexton's appeal, and then frigidly read his reply. It came in effect to this: 'The question you have now to decide is the leadership of the Irish party. I am not going to have that question mixed up with Home Rule. One question at a time. I hold the views on Home Rule which I have always held, and when the time comes for introducing a new Home Rule Bill you shall know all about it. Meanwhile rest assured that I shall introduce no Home Rule Bill which has not the unanimous approval of the Irish party.' The Irish delegates tried again and again to get a more satisfactory and definite answer, but they tried in vain, and finally left Carlton Gardens in much distress. Parnell's flank movement had been repelled and the Irish members were once more brought face to face with the question of the leadership, and the question of the leadership alone. It was an interesting game of tactics between the Grand Old Man and the Grand Young Man, but the former won.

At the meeting of the Irish party on December 6 the delegates gave an account of their interview with Mr. Gladstone, whereupon Mr. John O'Connor, Parnellite, moved, amid a scene of wild excitement:

'That having received a report of the proceedings between Mr. Gladstone and the delegates of the party appointed to confer with him, we regret to learn, and we call the attention of our fellow-countrymen to the fact, that Mr. Gladstone refuses to enter into negotiations with the Irish party, or to state his views on the

two vital points submitted for his consideration, except upon the condition that this party shall first remove Mr. Parnell from the chairmanship.' A stormy discussion ensued, and then the proceedings were suddenly brought to a close by Mr. Justin McCarthy rising and saying 'that it was idle to continue the proceedings any longer, and that he and his friends had resolved to retire from the room.' Then Mr. McCarthy, accompanied by forty-four members, withdrew; and Parnell, with twenty-six faithful followers, remained in the chair. 'The split' was complete; Mr. Gladstone had triumphed.

I have thus briefly described the moves in the game. I do not think it is necessary to dwell upon all the scenes which characterised the proceedings in Committee Room 15, or to give even the substance of the many able speeches which were delivered on both sides. But there are a few incidents of the fight which, as they concern Parnell personally, I must recall. He defended his position in what was I think the shortest speech made during the discussions. I shall give an extract.

'Mr. Healy has been trained in this warfare. Who trained him? Who saw his genius first? Who telegraphed to him from America? Who gave him his first opportunity and chance? Who got him his seat in Parliament? That Mr. Healy should be here to-day to destroy me is due to myself.

'Mr. Healy has reminded us that he attended the meeting at the Leinster Hall in Dublin. He reminded me of his services. He has not been slow to remind me of his services to me and to the party. I understand that Mr. Healy attended this meeting in Dublin, and seconded the resolution calling on me not to retire from the leadership. Who asked him to do that? Did I? Who asked Mr. Justin McCarthy to travel

to Dublin, and to say that he could give secret information tending to throw a different complexion on hidden events? Did I? Why was Mr. Sexton away from this meeting, when his counsel might have been of importance to prevent the ravelling up of a false situation? Where was he? Where were you all? Why did you encourage me to come forward and maintain my leadership in the face of the world if you were not going to stand by me? Why did my officers encourage me to take my position on the bridge and at the wheel, if they were going to act as traitors, and to hand me over to the other Commander-in-Chief.'

The Anti-Parnellites said not a word while the weakness of their position was thus exposed with merciless logic.

It was whispered in the lobbies of the House of Commons and in the Liberal clubs, by way of excuse for the conduct of the Anti-Parnellites in re-electing Parnell one day and throwing him over the next, that Parnell had said he would retire provided they re-elected him formally. Parnell dealt with this rumour in characteristic fashion. 'Who set this rumour afloat?' he asked. Someone told him Mr. Tuohy, the able London editor of the 'Freeman's Journal.' He at once summoned Mr. Tuohy to his side in Committee Room 15, and demanded a full inquiry, there and then, into the subject.

The scene which followed must be described.

*Mr. Parnell.* 'This is Mr. Tuohy who is wanted in this matter. Mr. Lane was under the impression, and stated to the meeting, that he had received from Mr. Tuohy a statement, which he communicated to Mr. Barry, that prior to the meeting on Tuesday I had expressed my intention of resigning in case I was re-

elected to the chairmanship of the party, and that this information so communicated by Mr. Tuohy produced a powerful impression on his mind, and also on Mr. Barry's, in reference to the subsequent proceedings. Now I have asked Mr. Tuohy to state to the meeting [what happened].'

*Mr. Lane* (intervening) said: 'Mr. Tuohy came to me in the Lobby a few minutes before we came here [November 25], and volunteered the statement to me that you were about to retire. I asked him, was he sure, and he said, "Yes." He then told it to Mr. Sexton, Mr. Barry, and some others. ("Hear, hear.") That statement, sir, was denied in this room at the meeting on Tuesday, and the moment the meeting was over I went and saw my old and valued friend, Mr. Tuohy, in the outer lobby, outside the telegraph office, and asked him on what authority he made the statement to me that Mr. Parnell intended to retire, and his words were—"On the best authority possible—that of Henry Campbell."'

*Mr. Parnell.* 'Perhaps Mr. Tuohy will now state as briefly as he can what took place between him and Mr. Lane.'

*Mr. Tuohy.* 'I saw Mr. Campbell at my office on the Saturday before the House met, and I had a conversation with him about the position of Mr. Parnell. We were discussing the matter, and he stated, as his own opinion, and expressly excluded himself from giving it as Mr. Parnell's opinion or intention, that in certain contingencies he thought Mr. Parnell might retire; for instance, if the General Election were forced immediately, and if disunion arose, and Mr. Parnell's continuing as leader would possibly lead to disaster. When I met Mr. Lane in the Lobby I stated to him,

in the first instance, that Mr. Campbell had given this entirely as his own opinion, and that it was not given as Mr. Parnell's intention at all.'

*Mr. J. Huntly McCarthy.* 'I may say a word on this matter, because I have no knowledge at all of what Mr. Tuohy said with Mr. Lane, but I had a conversation with Mr. Tuohy before the meeting of the party, and I distinctly understood from him that his impression was that Parnell would not resign.' (Applause.)

*Mr. Campbell.* 'I am sure you will all understand that my position for a considerable time has been a most difficult one. I have had a thousand questions asked me upon this matter during the last fortnight. First of all, I deny that I ever told Mr. Tuohy that I knew Mr. Parnell was going to resign, or that Mr. Parnell told me he was going to resign. But I think I can call in support of my word my friend Mr. Byrne, who asked me on the day of the meeting what Mr. Parnell was going to do. I told him he was going to stand by his position as leader of the party, and I also told my friend Mr. M. J. Kenny the same.'

*Mr. M. J. Kenny.* 'I think about eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning I met Mr. Campbell, and in the course of the short conversation I had with him he said it was your intention to hold on to the leadership. When I voted on Tuesday for you as leader, I voted for you in the belief that you intended to stick on.'

*Mr. Byrne.* 'Of what took place between Mr. Lane and Mr. Tuohy I know absolutely nothing. I met Mr. Campbell in the forenoon of Tuesday. I asked him, "How was the Chief? how was his health?" I said, "Is he going to accept the chairmanship?" He said, "Certainly." That is all that passed.'

Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton had said that Parnell owed his position to the parliamentary party. Parnell's reply was full of the imperial dignity and strength which characterised almost all his utterances. He told Mr. Sexton with perfect courtesy, but with clearness and truth, that it was he who had made the parliamentary party, and not the parliamentary party which had made him. He reminded every man in the room of the jealousies, the rivalries, the dissension, which would have long since rended the party asunder but for his commanding influence. He stood there, he told them, not the leader of a party, but the leader of a nation. He said: 'My responsibility is derived from you, to some extent—to a large extent; but it is also derived from a long train of circumstances and events in which many of you—and I speak to you with the greatest respect—have had no share. My position has been granted to me not because I am a mere leader of a parliamentary party, but because I am the leader of the Irish nation. It has been granted to me on account of the services which I have rendered in building up this party, in conciliating prejudices, in soothing differences of opinion, and in keeping together the discordant elements of our race within the bounds of moderation.'

One day there was a disorderly scene. Mr. Healy and Mr. Barry were disposed to resist the ruling of the chair; Parnell asserted his authority with characteristic vigour.

*Mr. Healy.* 'I rise to a point of order. I ask if the chairman would be good enough to inform me what is the question before the meeting?'

*Mr. E. Harrington.* 'No, no, you were but——'

*Mr. Parnell.* 'A discussion has been opened by

Mr. Barry on the question of communication with the delegates in America, and that discussion will have to proceed to its end.'

*Mr. Healy.* 'Another piece of pure obstruction.'

*Parnell.* 'I think that is a most insolent and impertinent observation—a most insolent and impertinent observation.'

*Mr. Barry.* 'I rise——'

*Parnell.* 'Sit down, Mr. Barry, please.'

*Mr. Barry.* 'Allow me——'

*Parnell.* 'I will not allow you, sir. Mr. Leamy is in possession, let him go on'; and Mr. Leamy went on.

Mr. Healy said in the course of these debates in Committee Room 15 that Mr. Parnell was 'judge,' 'counsel,' and 'defendant.' In a sense this statement is true. Parnell was himself perhaps the last man who would descend to the cant of saying that he had come to Committee Room 15 to hold the balance evenly between the parties—that he had come to sit judicially, and, having heard the discussion, to put the resolution dethroning him to the meeting. He came to Committee Room 15, not to adjudicate but to fight, and to fight with his back to the wall. There can be no doubt whatever about that fact. 'If you admit that,' an Anti-Parnellite said, 'if you say that, distrusting and despising the whole lot of us, he came to fight and to beat us, then of course there cannot be a question but that he fought according to the rules of war, and with a skill, an energy, and a dash which extorted admiration from every man in the room.'

'I thought I knew Parnell well,' says Mr. Healy, 'but it was only in Committee Room 15 that I realised his bigness. No one man could have admired his



genius, his resources, his generalship, in that fight more than I did.'

One night before the debates in Committee Room 15 had concluded, Parnell sat in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons having a cup of tea with one of the Irish members. For some moments he remained quite silent; and then suddenly, as if thinking aloud, said: 'Yes, I always felt it would end in this way.' His companion said nothing. His first thought was that Parnell might be going to talk about the Divorce Court.

'Yes,' repeated the Chief, 'I always said it would end badly.'

'What,' at length said his companion, 'what did you say would end badly?'

'The Plan of Campaign,' answered Parnell.

## CHAPTER XXIV

## KILKENNY

THE scene of the struggle now changes from London to Ireland. An election was pending in North Kilkenny. Sir John Pope Hennessy had been selected as the Nationalist candidate before the split. The question now arose, Upon which side—Parnellite or Anti Parnellite—would he stand?

While the matter was still in suspense Parnell sent for me. We met in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons on, I think, Monday evening, December 8. He looked tired, ill, distressed. He seemed to me to be absolutely without energy. He leant back on the seat and appeared to be quite absent-minded. Speaking in a very low voice and as if suffering physical pain, he said, after a while: 'I want to talk to you about Kilkenny. We have wired to Hennessy to ask if he will stand for us, and we have received no reply yet. Suppose the reply is unfavourable, will you stand?' I replied it would not suit me for many reasons to go into Parliament; and that, for one reason, I could not afford to pay the expenses of a contested election. 'You want a man with money,' I said. He answered: 'I know that, and I will get a man with money if I can; but if I can't, will you stand?' It was finally agreed that I should stand if called upon,

and that he would pay my expenses. In Parliament itself, of course, I should be self-supporting.

On Tuesday night, December 9, he started for Ireland, accompanied by many of his colleagues. A reporter from the 'Freeman's Journal' asked him before his departure, 'What message, Mr. Parnell, shall I send from you to the Irish people?' 'Tell them,' he replied, 'that I will fight to the end.'

On Wednesday morning, December 10, he arrived in Dublin and went straight to the house of Dr. Kenny. There he received a hearty welcome, not only from the multitude collected outside but from the many friends gathered within. An eyewitness has given me an account of the scene in Dr. Kenny's breakfast-room on that eventful morning. 'The room was full of men, all talking together, interrupting each other, making suggestions and counter-suggestions, proposing plans and counter-plans, and everyone too full of his own views to listen to the views of anyone else. Parnell sat silently near the fire, looking thoughtfully into it and apparently heeding nothing that was going on. Mrs. Kenny entered the room, made her way through the crowd to Parnell, and said: 'Mr. Parnell, do you not want something to eat?'

'That is just what I do want,' he said, with a smile.

'Why,' said Mrs. Kenny, going among the agitators, 'don't you see that the man is worn out and wants something to eat, while you all keep talking and debating, and making a noise.'

Soon there was complete silence, and Parnell sat to the table, saying, 'I am as hungry as a hawk.'

Breakfast over, the Chief did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. 'United Ireland,' which had

been founded by him, had under the direction of Mr. Matthias Bodkin, the acting editor in Mr. William O'Brien's absence, gone over to the enemy. Parnell's first order was, 'Seize "United Ireland," expel Bodkin, and put Mr. Leamy in charge of the paper.' This order was carried out on the morning of December 18, under the superintendence of Parnell himself, with characteristic vigour and despatch. Going straight to the office of the paper he removed Mr. Bodkin and his staff, placing Mr. Leamy in the editorial chair. One of Parnell's Fenian supporters has given me a brief and pithy account of what happened. 'I went up to Matty Bodkin. "Matty," says I, "will you walk out, or would you like to be thrown out?" and Matty walked out.'

That night Parnell addressed a great meeting at the Rotunda. Miss Katharine Tynan (Mrs. Hinkson) was present, and has given a graphic account of what she saw: 'It was nearly 8.30 when we heard the bands coming; then the windows were lit up by the lurid glare of thousands of torches in the street outside. There was a distant roaring like the sea. The great gathering within waited silently with expectation. Then the cheering began, and we craned our necks and looked on eagerly, and there was the tall, slender, distinguished figure of the Irish leader making its way across the platform. I don't think any words could do justice to his reception. The house rose at him; everywhere around there was a sea of passionate faces, loving, admiring, almost worshipping that silent, pale man. The cheering broke out again and again; there was no quelling it. Mr. Parnell bowed from side to side, sweeping the assemblage with his eagle glance. The people were fairly mad with excitement. I don't think anyone outside Ireland can understand what a

charm Mr. Parnell has for the Irish heart; that wonderful personality of his, his proud bearing, his handsome, strong face, the distinction of look which marks him more than anyone I have ever seen. All these are irresistible to the artistic Irish.

‘I said to Dr. Kenny, who was standing by me, “He is the only quiet man here.” “Outwardly,” said the keen medical man, emphatically. Looking again, one saw the dilated nostrils, the flashing eye, the passionate face: the leader was simply drinking in thirstily this immense love, which must have been more heartening than one can say after that bitter time in the English capital. Mr. Parnell looked frail enough in body—perhaps the black frock-coat, buttoned so tightly across his chest, gave him that look of attenuation; but he also looked full of indomitable spirit and fire.

‘For a time silence was not obtainable. Then Father Walter Hurley climbed on the table and stood with his arms extended. It was curious how the attitude silenced a crowd which could hear no words.

‘When Mr. Parnell came to speak, the passion within him found vent. It was a wonderful speech; not one word of it for oratorical effect, but every word charged with a pregnant message to the people who were listening to him, and the millions who should read him. It was a long speech, lasting nearly an hour; but listened to with intense interest, punctuated by fierce cries against men whom this crisis has made odious, now and then marked in a pause by a deep-drawn moan of delight. It was a great speech—simple, direct, suave—with no device and no artificiality. Mr. Parnell said long ago, in a furious moment in the House of Commons, that he cared nothing for the opinion of the

English people. One remembered it now, noting his passionate assurances to his own people, who loved him too well to ask him questions.'

One sentence from Parnell's speech will suffice. It was the simple truth, and went to the heart of every man and every woman in the assembly.

'I don't pretend that I had not moments of trial and of temptation, but I do claim that never in thought, word, or deed have I been false to the trust that Irishmen have confided in me.'

There were many in the Rotunda who did not look upon Parnell as a blameless man, or even a blameless politician; but all felt that in every emergency, through good report and ill report, he had been faithful to Ireland and the foe of English rule in the island. This was the bond of union between him and the men who carried the 'thousands of torches' which lighted up his path that night—the men on whom he now relied to face his enemies.

While the meeting in the Rotunda was going on the Anti-Parnellites made a raid on 'United Ireland,' and recaptured it.

Next morning Parnell rose betimes—he had to start for Cork by an early train. But 'United Ireland' was not to be left in the hands of the seceders. Dr. Kenny's carriage was quickly ordered to the door. 'We must re-capture "United Ireland" on our way to the train,' said the Chief, as he finished his breakfast.

A description of the dramatic scene which followed has been given to me by a gentleman wholly unconnected with politics, who happened, by the merest chance, to be in the neighbourhood when the final battle over 'United Ireland' was fought.

'I was walking down the north side of O'Connell Street, when there was a rush from all quarters in the direction of Lower Abbey Street. I followed the crowd, which stopped opposite the office of "United Ireland." There I witnessed a scene of wild excitement. Sticks and revolvers were being circulated freely by men who passed in and out of the dense mass, but as yet no blows had been exchanged.

'The enemy was, in fact, safe behind barred doors and windows, out of harm's way for the present, in the office of "United Ireland." Suddenly round the street corner dashed a pony carriage containing two gentlemen, as well as I can remember unattended; one, I was told, was Dr. Kenny, the other I knew to be Charles Stewart Parnell. I had seen him before in Ennis addressing a multitude of Clare men under the shadow of O'Connell's monument. I had been struck on that day by his power of electrifying a great multitude. I was to be even more moved and startled by him on this day. The carriage dashed on, the people making way for it, and it was as well, for no attempt was made to slacken speed. Both men seemed heedless of the crowd, thinking sternly of the seizure of the offices which they had come to make. A tremendous sensation was produced by the appearance of Parnell. They had been, doubtless, on the point of storming the citadel of the mutineers, and here was their captain come to fight in their front. Cheer after cheer filled the air, mingled with cries of hatred, defiance, and exultation. The carriage was checked so abruptly that the horse fell flat upon the road. Parnell sprang out, rushed up the steps, and knocked peremptorily at the office door. There was a pause, during which every eye regarded him and him alone. Suddenly he turned,

his face pale with passion, his dark eyes flaming; he realised that obedience was not to be expected from those within, realised also the pain of being taunted and jeered at by his own countrymen, for there were indications of this from those within. He turned and spoke to some of his followers, then stood to wait. We knew by instinct that he was not going to turn away from that door, at which he had demanded admittance; he intended to storm the stronghold of the mutineers.

'I forgot everything save that there was going to be a historic fight, and that I wanted to have a good view of it. I dashed into a house opposite, and, without waiting for formal leave, ran upstairs. The windows of the first floor were crowded. I ran higher up, and soon gained a splendid point of vantage. I was in full sight of the beleaguered offices, and had a bird's-eye view of the crowd in the street—a crowd of grim, determined, passionate men, many of them armed, and all ready and eager for a fray. Parnell's envoys were back by this time, bringing from some place near a crowbar and pickaxe. There was a brief discussion. Then Parnell suddenly realised that the fort might be carried from the area door. In a moment he was on the point of vaulting the railings. The hands of considerate friends restrained him by force. I heard his voice ring out clearly, impatiently, imperatively: "Go yourselves, if you will not let me." At the word several of those around him dropped into the area. Now Parnell snatched the crowbar, and, swinging his arms with might and main, thundered at the door. The door yielded, and, followed by those nearest to him, he disappeared into the hall. Instantly uprose a terrible noise. The other storming party, it seems, had entered



from the area, and, rushing upstairs, had crashed into Parnell's bodyguard. What happened within the house I do not know, for spectators outside could only hold their breath and listen and guess. Feet clattered on the boarded stairs, voices hoarse with rage shrieked and shouted. A veritable pandemonium was let loose. At last there was a lull within, broken by the cheers of the waiting crowd without. One of the windows on the second storey was removed, and Parnell suddenly appeared in the aperture. He had conquered. The enthusiasm which greeted him cannot be described. His face was ghastly pale, save only that on either cheek a hectic crimson spot was glowing. His hat was off now, his hair dishevelled, the dust of the conflict begrimed his well-brushed coat. The people were spellbound, almost terrified, as they gazed on him. For myself, I felt a thrill of dread, as if I looked at a tiger in the frenzy of its rage. Then he spoke, and the tone of his voice was even more terrible than his look. He was brief, rapid, decisive, and the closing words of his speech still ring in my ear: "I rely on Dublin. Dublin is true. What Dublin says to-day Ireland will say to-morrow."

'He had simply recaptured "United Ireland" on his way going south to Cork. The work done, he immediately entered the carriage and drove to King's Bridge terminus. After what I had witnessed I could not go tamely about my business. Hailing a car, I dashed down the quays. Many other cars went in the same direction, and the faithful crowd followed afoot. I was among the first to reach the terminus. I pushed towards the platform, but was stopped by the ticket collector. I was determined, however, not to be baulked, and I was engaged in a hot altercation with him, when

I felt myself being crushed and wedged forward. With or without leave, I was being swept onto the platform, and, turning to see who was pushing or being pushed against me in the gangway, I found to my amazement that the foremost in the throng was Parnell himself. My look of angry remonstrance was doubtless soon turned, as I met his inscrutable gaze, into one of curious awe. The crowd at the station was now immense, and the spirit of "I don't care what I do" which led me up to the room in Lower Abbey Street seemed to inspire everybody. People rushed about madly on the platform, seeking for every point of vantage to look at the Chief. Ladies got out of the first-class carriages of the train, which was waiting to start, and mingled in the throng. Parnell had entered a saloon carriage; the crowd cheered again and again, calling his name. He stood at the carriage window, looking pale, weary, wistful, and bowed graciously to the enthusiastic crowd. Many of those present endorsed the words of a young lady who exclaimed, addressing an elderly aristocrat wrapped in furs: "Oh, father, hasn't he a lovely face!" The face disappeared from the window. The cheers again rose up, and then died away as the train passed from our sight.'

Parnell arrived in Cork that evening, and received a hearty welcome from his constituents, whom he addressed in a stirring speech, the keynote of which was 'No English dictation.' Throughout the day he was full of fight, and bore himself bravely; but when night came on he showed manifest signs of fatigue, illness, worry, and distress.

Says his old friend Mr. Horgan :

'I remember his visit to Cork after the fight in Committee Room 15. I saw him in the Victoria Hotel

that night. He looked like a hunted hind ; his hair was dishevelled, his beard unkempt, his eyes were wild and restless. The room was full of people. He sat down to a chop ; but he only made a pretence of eating. I did not like to speak to him, but his eye rested on me and he called me to him. I sat near him, and we talked generally. After a time the waiter came to him and said, "Would you wish to see your room, Mr. Parnell?" Parnell said, "Oh no. I am not going to sleep here. I am going to sleep with my friend, Mr. Horgan." I sent a messenger to my wife to say we should arrive in about an hour, and to have things ready. When we arrived she received him very kindly, as if nothing had happened. She had some supper prepared for him, but he said he would not take anything except a raw egg. We got him the raw egg, and the tumbler. He broke the egg into the tumbler and swallowed it at a gulp. He then said, "That's a very good egg. May I have another?" and he swallowed that just the same. He then said, "I will now go to bed." In the morning he sent the maid for me about seven o'clock. I found him sitting in the bed drinking a tumbler of hot water. He said: 'I want to see Sir John Arnot. I want to induce him to buy the Ponsonby Estate, and to restore the evicted tenants. I must see him secretly. Can you manage it?' I said: "No, that it was impossible; that Arnot was an old man and could not come to him, and that if he went to Arnot the whole town would know it." After some further talk he felt the project was hopeless, and abandoned it.'

Before Parnell's departure from London he had sent me a telegram, saying: 'Come to Dublin as soon as possible.' Sir John Pope Hennessy had

just declared that he would support the Catholic hierarchy, who had on December 3 condemned Parnell's leadership on moral grounds. Parnell was thus left on the eve of the election without a candidate. On December 11 I started for Dublin, writing to Parnell saying that I would go through with the business, but still expressing the hope that he would get a better man. In the meantime, Mr. Vincent Scully, a gentleman of wealth and position, a Tipperary landlord with popular sympathies and a generous heart, had chivalrously jumped into the breach. 'I stood for Kilkenny,' he afterwards said to me, 'as a protest against the publication of Gladstone's letter to Morley. Explain it as they may, that was English dictation.'

It was characteristic of Parnell that having accepted Scully's candidature on the morning of the 11th, he did not take the trouble to communicate the fact to me. 'Shall I wire to O'Brien not to come?' Dr. Kenny asked him at breakfast. 'No,' said he, 'he has started by this time.'

Dr. Kenny explained that I might be turned back *en route*. 'No,' said the Chief, 'better let him come on. You can meet him when he arrives and explain.' 'Well,' I said, on hearing the Doctor's explanation, 'he has of course done what is right, but why did you not wire and stop me? And what does Parnell expect me to do now?' 'He expects you,' said the Doctor, 'to come to Kilkenny to help Scully.' And we both laughed.

During the Kilkenny election someone said, 'It is only Parnell who can do these things. He has been in treaty with three candidates, O'Brien, Scully, and John Kelly. He finally nominates Scully, and gets the

other two to come to Kilkenny to help Scully, and all three work together like niggers.'

I arrived at Kilkenny on Saturday evening, the 13th December. The Parnellites had practically taken possession of the Victoria Hotel. One room was given up to the Press. Almost all the rest of the hotel was held by the supporters of the Chief. I found the large coffee-room upstairs full of men. Some were at the table, dining, others were seated on the lounge, more stood in clusters around. I was struck by the silence which prevailed. All spoke in whispers; waiters stole softly in and out. Every individual seemed anxious to make no noise. It was like the stillness of a sick-room. In a sense it was a sick-room. Stretched on a number of chairs before the fire lay Parnell, sleeping. To me he looked like a dying man. 'He's been very ill,' said Mr. J. J. O'Kelly, the one personal friend whom Parnell had in the whole party—the one man to whom he freely opened his mind, when, indeed, he opened it at all. 'He's been very ill, and we want to get him to bed. A good night's rest would set him up.' I dined in the Press room. About half an hour afterwards someone came to say that Parnell wished to see me. I found him sitting in an arm-chair. He looked pale and exhausted, but the old fire still burned in his eyes. 'I am glad you have come,' he said. I asked: 'How does the fight go on?' He replied: 'They have got at the miners in Castlecomer; Davitt did that; they were first in the field.' 'Upon the whole, are you hopeful?' I again asked. 'Yes,' he answered, 'but remember this is only the first battle of the campaign. If the priests were on your side,' I said, 'you would sweep the country from end to end.' 'Yes,' he said, 'it is the priests.' Then, looking into the fire, he added:

'I do not blame the people for following the priests. It is natural; but the priests are not good political guides.' 'Have you all the Fenians at your back?' I asked. 'Yes, in Ireland,' he answered. 'America?' I said. 'I shall have them in America, too,' he replied. Soon after Mr. O'Kelly came up, and said: 'I think you had better go to bed. You have a big day's work before you to-morrow. You had better have a good night's rest.' Parnell said: 'Yes, I will go to my room.'

Mr. O'Kelly was right. A good night's rest did set Parnell up. Next morning he was a new man. I was alone in the breakfast-room when he came down. 'How are you, this morning?' I asked. 'Very well,' he answered, with a jaunty shake of the head, and looking very bright and handsome. 'I want you,' he went on, 'to take charge of my letters. Open them all; let me have those you think important, destroy the rest. Keep all the telegrams unopened until I return each evening.' A couple of hours later he mounted the drag at the door, to drive to some outlying district; and one could not help being impressed by his appearance when, as the crowd cheered enthusiastically, he raised his hat and bowed with that kingly air which was his chief characteristic.

On Monday night he did not return to Kilkenny. Meanwhile a committee of six had been formed to manage the election. The committee was a failure. There was a good deal of talk, a good deal of discussion, a good deal of indecision, and no practical work. About ten o'clock on Monday night, as the committee sat in solemn conclave, everybody proposing something but nobody agreeing to anything, the door opened and a messenger from Parnell entered. 'I have come from

the Chief,' he said. Up to that moment there had been a babel of talk in the room. Now there was dead silence. 'What does he say?' asked the chairman of the committee. 'He says that this committee must be broken up,' was the quick answer; and everyone burst into laughter. The Chief was eight or ten miles away from the scene of the committee's labours, but had he been on the spot, had he witnessed the operations of the committee, he could not have arrived at a sounder decision. Everyone in the room felt that. 'Well, and what's to be done?' asked the chairman. 'He says that one man is to remain here and take charge of the whole work. He can have a local assistant if he likes. The rest of you must be distributed over the division. One person must direct operations from the centre.' 'Well, who is that person to be?' said the late chairman of the defunct committee. 'L.' was the answer. 'Why L.?' said the ex-chairman. 'Because the Chief thinks he can keep us in touch with our friends in London and in Dublin.' And so it was settled. 'If I am to be in charge,' said L., 'I must have the assistance of ——,' naming a Fenian. 'Well,' said the Parliamentarians, 'you had better be careful. You may raise a spirit which you cannot lay.' 'That's nonsense,' said L. 'The spirit is raised already, and raised by Parnell. This town of Kilkenny is held by Fenians, and Parnell could not carry on the fight for a week without the Fenians. At this moment the Fenian in question burst into the room. 'Where is Mr. Parnell?' he asked. He was told that Parnell would not return to Kilkenny that night. 'Well,' he said, 'Mr. Parnell made an appointment with me here at ten o'clock, and if Mr. Parnell does not keep his appointments with me I shall leave

the town at once.' This announcement had a startling effect, and the Parliamentarians began to explain. 'I want no explanations,' said the Fenian. 'We are here to help Mr. Parnell; we are not paid by him. We are not his people. He must keep his appointments.' And he flew out of the room as suddenly as he had entered it. 'Well, gentlemen,' said L., as soon as he had gone, 'what do you say now? Are you going to ignore ——.' 'I say,' answered the ex-chairman, 'that we had better obey Parnell. He has named a man to work the whole business. Let him have all responsibility.'

That night L. and —— took counsel together, and next day the members of the late committee were distributed over the division. On Monday night Parnell returned, and remained for some time in consultation with ——, whose forces, indeed, formed the van of the Parnellite army.

The election lasted for ten days. During that time Parnell showed wonderful vigour for a man in failing health, going from end to end of the division, speaking, working, directing, returning each night much fatigued, retiring early to rest, and coming down next morning full of fight and energy. 'While I have my life,' he said at Kilkenny two days before the polling, 'I will go from one constituency to another, from one city to another, from one town and village and parish to another, to put what I know is the truth before the people.' At Castlecomer, where the rival parties met, Davitt sent a message proposing that both of them should speak side by side from the same drag and answer each other's speeches. 'Tell him,' said Parnell, with a grim smile at the grotesqueness of the proposal, 'that I have come to fight, not to treat.'



Davitt attacked him for 'appealing in his desperation to the hillside men and the Fenian sentiment of the country,' adding: 'It would be a piece of criminal folly in Mr. Parnell to lead the young men of the country to face the might of England in the field.' Parnell replied in a stirring speech, addressed to the 'physical force men,' from the window of the Victoria Hotel, Kilkenny, defining his position towards them with characteristic precision and frankness:

'I have, in answer to this, to announce, in no undecided tones and with a clear voice, that I have appealed to no section of my country. My appeal has been made to the whole Irish race, and if the young men are distinguished amongst my supporters it is because they know what I have promised them I will do. I have not promised to lead them against the armed might of England. I have told them that, so long as I can maintain an independent Irish party in the English Parliament, there is hope of winning our legislative independence by constitutional means. I have said that, and I repeat it to-night. Hear it again. So long as we can keep our Irish party pure and undefiled from any contact or fusion with any English parliamentary party, independent and upright, there is good reason for us to hope that we shall win legislative independence for Ireland by constitutional means. So long as such a party exists I will remain at its head. But when it appears to me that it is impossible to obtain Home Rule for Ireland by constitutional means, I have said this—and this is the extent and limit of my pledge, that is the pledge which has been accepted by the young men of Ireland, whom Michael Davitt in his derision calls the hillside men—I have said that when it is clear to me that I can no longer hope to obtain

our constitution by constitutional and parliamentary means, I will in a moment so declare it to the people of Ireland, and, returning at the head of my party, I will take counsel with you as to the next step. That, fellow-countrymen, is the nature and extent of my declaration, which I made in Cork in '80—which was accepted then by my constituents when they placed me at the head of the poll in succession to my late friend Joseph Ronayne. That pledge was accepted by the whole of Ireland—by the hillside men and every other man in the country—as a just position for me to take up and to fight this constitutional battle from. I have not in any sense, not in one iota, departed from it. I stand on the same ground to-night as I did then, and if the young men of Ireland have trusted me it is because they know that I am not a mere Parliamentary ; that I can be trusted to keep my word to them to go as far as a brave and honest heart can go on this parliamentary alliance, and test it to the uttermost, and that when and if I find it useless and unavailing to persevere further, they can depend upon me to tell them so. . . . I have stood on the same platform, I have remained true to the same declarations and the same pledges, and when anybody has the audacity to taunt me with being a hillside man I say to him I am what I am because I am known to be an honest, and an unchanging Irishman.'

It would be idle to deny that the struggle at Kilkenny was a fight between Parnellism *plus* Fenianism and the Church. Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals influenced, indeed dominated, the majority of the Irish members. But the priests, and the priests alone, influenced and dominated the electors of North Kilkenny. I will give an illustration of what I mean. In

district—Kilmanagh—the parish priest, Father Murphy, supported Parnell. In that district Parnell had a majority. In every other district the parish priest was against him, and in every other district he was beaten. ‘Do any of the Parliamentarians,’ I asked a Fenian, ‘count in this fight?’ ‘Not one,’ he answered; ‘Healy is fighting like a devil, but only for the priests and the police he could not remain in the constituency for an hour. The only power in Ireland that can stand up to Parnell is the Church, and the only power that can stand up to the Church is Fenianism.’ Parnell felt the pressure of the priests at every turn. But only on one occasion did I see him show irritation or anger. It was stated that the priests intended to act as personation agents on the day of the election. ‘They shall not act as personation agents,’ he said with unusual excitement; ‘it is illegal.’ Someone pointed out that it was not illegal, however undesirable. ‘They shall not act,’ he repeated with energy. ‘A protest must be prepared at once, and sent to the sheriff.’ Two days later Mr. Scully handed me the protest, saying: ‘Parnell insists upon this being sent to the sheriff, but I think it is a mistake every way. The priests have a legal right to act. I wish you would see Parnell.’ I went into the coffee-room, where Parnell was sitting on the lounge, apart from everyone, and looking—a very unusual thing—decidedly sulky. I sat near him and said, holding up the protest: ‘I want to talk to you about this. Will you give me five minutes?’ ‘I will give you an hour if you like,’ he said, with a grim expression; ‘you can talk away.’ I said I thought the protest was a mistake, that it would have no legal effect, and that I was doubtful whether it would have a useful political effect. He said it was a mischievous practice and

should be stopped. After some more conversation I said: 'You are drawing the sword on the whole order instead of objecting to the action of any individual priest. O'Connell could afford to do this; you can't. If the priests have to be fought, they must be fought by Catholics, not by Protestants.' 'Ah! now,' he said, 'you have said something which is quite true. A Protestant leader must not do this. But the system must be stopped. You Catholics must stop it. The priests themselves must be got to see that it is wrong.' 'Shall I tear this?' I said, holding up the protest. 'Yes,' he answered, with his old pleasant and winning smile.

The polling took place on December 22. That night Parnell, fresh from visiting almost all the polling stations, came into a room in the hotel where I sat alone. 'I wish to be alone,' he said. 'See that no one comes in.' He took off his coat, hat, muffler, sat near the fire, removed his boots and socks (which he carefully examined), warmed his feet, and remained in a deep reverie for some twenty minutes. Then, having put on another pair of boots, he stood with his back to the mantel-shelf and said, with a droll smile: 'They are making calculations in the other room of our majority. I think they will be surprised when the poll is declared to-morrow. We have been well beaten. But it is only the first battle of the campaign. I will contest every election in the country. I will fight while I live'—a promise which he kept to the bitter end. Next morning the votes were counted. There was no man in the room at the Court House during that process who seemed to be in better humour or who looked less anxious, though he watched everything very carefully and was always on the alert, than Parnell.

Davitt was walking up and down at one end of the room with nervous energy. I came and talked to him. 'A nice scene this,' he said. 'It reminds me of what you sometimes see in the Holy Land—Christians quarrelling with each other over Our Lord's tomb, while Mohammedan soldiers look on and keep the peace. Here are we Irish Nationalists ready to fly at each other's throats while these English police stand by to keep order. It is perfectly disgraceful. What will he (Parnell) do now? He is beaten by at least 1,000 votes.' 'Well, Davitt,' I replied, 'you ought to know him better than I. He will fight on. One defeat, twenty defeats, won't affect him. He will not take his dismissal from an Englishman.' Davitt shook his head sorrowfully. On rejoining Parnell (who sat at the top of the table near the sheriff, keeping a keen eye on Mr. Healy—who was opposite—all the time), he said: 'I see you have been talking to the future leader of the Irish race at home and abroad. He looks very uncomfortable. What is the matter with him?' 'Well,' I replied, 'Davitt at all events is not opposing you at the bidding of Mr. Gladstone. He took his line—rightly or wrongly—before Mr. Gladstone spoke. That is the difference between him and the rest of your opponents.' 'Yes,' he said, looking thoughtfully at Davitt, who still kept walking up and down. 'That is true, and he has suffered too.'

About one o'clock the poll was declared:

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Pope Hennessy . . . .  | 2,527 |
| Vincent Scully . . . . | 1,362 |

That night Parnell returned to Dublin, and addressed a large meeting of his followers gathered outside the

National Club in Rutland Square. 'I am blamed,' he said, 'for refusing to leave Ireland—I will not say to the mercy of Mr. Gladstone, but I will say to the rag-tag and bob-tail of the English Liberal party, and of the English Press. These men did not give me my commission, and I will not receive my dismissal from them.'

## CHAPTER XXV

## THE BOULOGNE NEGOTIATIONS

THE scene now changes once more. Towards the end of December Mr. William O'Brien arrived at Boulogne from America. He could not return to Ireland as a warrant was still out for his arrest.<sup>1</sup> He was anxious to see Parnell with a view of discussing the possibilities of peace. Parnell, it must be said, had now little faith in ending the struggle by diplomatic action. He believed the fight would have to be fought out to the end. Yet, yielding to the wishes of his colleagues, he consented to meet Mr. O'Brien at Boulogne. In the closing days of the old year he crossed the Channel accompanied by Mr. John Redmond, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. J. J. Clancy, Mr. Henry Campbell, and Mr. Vincent Scully. Mr. John Redmond has given me an account of the meeting between the Chief and his old lieutenant.

'When we arrived we went to an hotel. O'Brien rushed up gushingly to meet Parnell, who was extremely reserved and cold. He saluted O'Brien just as

<sup>1</sup> Warrants were out for the arrest both of Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Dillon. They had, as I have already mentioned, escaped from Ireland in August 1890, by the help of a Fenian who carried them across the Channel to France in a private yacht. Afterwards, when Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Dillon deserted Parnell, this Fenian—a bluff and witty Revolutionist—said: 'Ah, when I had them in the middle of the Channel, why didn't I drop them there?'

if he had seen him yesterday, and as if there were nothing special going forward. O'Brien plunged into business at once. "Oh no, William," said Parnell, "I must get something to eat first." Then he ordered luncheon and we all sat down and ate. When luncheon was over Parnell said: "Now, William, we will talk." We then adjourned to another room. Parnell remained silent, reserved, cold. He did not in any way encourage O'Brien to talk. He looked around at the rest of us, as much as to say, "Well, what the devil do you all want?" The rest of us soon withdrew, leaving Parnell and O'Brien together. After some time O'Brien rejoined us. He looked utterly flabbergasted, said it was all over, and that Parnell had no intention of doing anything. I asked him if he had made any proposals to Parnell, or if he had any proposals to make. He said that he had proposals, but did not submit them to Parnell, as Parnell seemed so unwilling to talk. He then stated the proposals to me, which were substantially, so far as I can now remember, these:

'1. The retraction of the bishops' manifesto.

'2. Some acknowledgment from Mr. Gladstone that the publication of his letter was precipitate and inadvisable.

'3. A meeting of the whole party in Dublin with Parnell in the chair; acknowledgment of the informality of Mr. McCarthy's election as chairman.

'4. Voluntary resignation of Parnell, who should, however, remain President of the National League.

'5. Election of a temporary chairman.

'6. Appointment of Dillon as chairman.

'I went immediately to Parnell, and told him of these proposals. "Ah, now," he said, "we have something specific to go upon. Let O'Brien come back."



'O'Brien came back, and these points were discussed. Parnell said at once that he would not accept the chairmanship of Dillon, but he would with pleasure accept the chairmanship of O'Brien. O'Brien and I then went out and wired to Dillon, saying that Parnell had proposed that O'Brien should be leader of the party. Dillon wired back, warning O'Brien to beware of Parnell, and not to trust him. Such at least is my recollection of the substance of the telegram. Next day Parnell returned to London, and I went to Paris with O'Brien, where I remained for some eight or ten days. Nothing so far was settled.'

Soon after his return to London Parnell wrote (January 1, 1891) to Mr. O'Brien, saying that he feared the latter's proposals were impracticable. He, however, had a counter-proposal to make. This proposal was nothing more nor less than a revival of the Clancy compromise. Having set out the details of the compromise, Parnell went on :

*Parnell to Mr. O'Brien*

'My proposal now is : (1) That you should suggest to Mr. McCarthy to obtain an interview with Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden, and ask from him a memorandum expressing the intentions of himself and his colleagues upon these views and details, as explained by the delegates in their interview with Mr. Gladstone on December 5. (2) That Mr. McCarthy should transfer this memorandum to your custody, and that if, after a consultation between yourself and myself, it should be found that its terms are satisfactory, I should forthwith announce my retirement from the chairmanship of the party. (3) That

the terms of this memorandum should not be disclosed to any other person until after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, and not then unless this Bill failed to carry out those terms; but that if the Bill were satisfactory I should be permitted to publish the memorandum after the passing of the former into law. I would agree that instead of adopting the limit of two years as the period in which the constabulary should be disarmed and turned into a civil force, and handed over to the Irish Executive, the term might be extended to five years; but I regard the fixing of some term of years for this in the Bill of the most vital importance. I also send you the inclosed copy of the clause of the Bill of 1886 relating to the Metropolitan Police and Constabulary. I do not think it necessary to insist upon the charge for the latter during the period of probation being paid out of the Imperial funds, as I do not wish to increase Mr. Gladstone's difficulties.

'P.S.—It should be noted that Gladstone can scarcely refuse to communicate with Mr. McCarthy on these subjects, as, in his letter to the delegates, he stated that as soon as the question of the leadership of the party was settled he would be in a position to open confidential communications again, and he has publicly acknowledged Mr. McCarthy's election as valid.'

It will be seen by this letter that Parnell simply held the ground which he had taken up in Committee Room 15. There he had said: 'If you sell me, see that you get value.'

The value he suggested was satisfactory assurances from the Liberal party on the subjects of the

land and the police. The only new condition which he imported was, that he and Mr. O'Brien should alone be the judges of the satisfactoriness of the Liberal assurances. To this letter Mr. O'Brien replied :

*Mr. O'Brien to Parnell*

' 4th, 1st, '91

' MY DEAR MR. PARNELL,—I received your letter and have given as much thought as I was able to the important proposal it contained. If, as on the first reading of your letter there seemed to be some likelihood, you were disposed to drop the objection to McCarthy's continuance in the chairmanship, the new proposal would seem to diminish the difficulties of conciliating English opinion. If, however, your first determination on that point remains unchanged, the necessity which the Hawarden plan involves, of employing McCarthy in a transaction so painful to himself personally would seem to me to raise a formidable obstacle to that form of securing the guarantees desired. I have been turning the matter over in my mind as to another way in which equally satisfactory results might be obtained, and when we meet in Boulogne on Tuesday I hope to be able to submit it with sufficient definiteness to enable us to thrash it out with some prospect of an immediate and satisfactory agreement. Those who are bent on thwarting peace at any price are building great hopes upon delays or breakdowns of our Boulogne negotiations ; but I am beginning to entertain some real hope that with promptness and good feeling on both sides we may still be able to hit upon some agreement that will relieve the country from an appalling prospect, and

that neither you nor I will have any reason to regret hereafter.

‘Believe me, my dear Mr. Parnell,

‘Ever sincerely yours,

‘WILLIAM O'BRIEN.’

Besides sending this letter to Parnell, Mr. O'Brien despatched the following telegram to Mr. Harrington :

*Mr. O'Brien to Mr. Harrington*

[TELEGRAM]

‘Does new proposal mean withdrawal objection to McCarthy continuing chairman? Letter not clear on that point. If McCarthy continues chairman think new proposal feasible, and would do best to carry it out.’

Mr. Harrington replied :

*Mr. Harrington to Mr. O'Brien*

[TELEGRAM]

‘Proposal is subject to your acceptance of chairmanship, and you alone. We are with Chief in that. He would depend on you alone to consider his feelings and consult. Your message raises my hopes. God bless your efforts.’

The ‘other way’ referred to by Mr. O'Brien, ‘in which equally satisfactory results might be obtained,’ was: (1) election of Mr. O'Brien as chairman; (2) visit of Mr. O'Brien to Hawarden to obtain assurances from Mr. Gladstone; (3) resignation of Mr. O'Brien if the assurances were not satisfactory, and his adhesion to Parnell.

It must not be supposed that in making this proposal Mr. O'Brien was animated by motives of personal

ambition. Far from it. He had no desire to become chairman of the party; his sole object in these negotiations was to make peace, and finding Parnell strongly opposed to the chairmanship of Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Dillon, he made this suggestion in the hope of getting over the difficulty. He thought it was unreasonable to send Mr. McCarthy to Hawarden on the understanding that, whether he got satisfactory assurances or not, he should retire from the chair. Mr. Redmond was, as I have said, in Paris at this time, and knew all about Mr. O'Brien's new plan. On January 5 he wired to Parnell: 'O'Brien wrote you yesterday. Let nothing prevent your meeting us to-morrow.'

On Tuesday, January 6, Parnell came to Boulogne. 'I saw him alone first,' says Mr. Redmond, 'and we had a short private talk about O'Brien's new plan. He said nothing, but looked at me with an amused, and an amusing, smile. I could not help feeling what a pair of children O'Brien and I were in the hands of this man. The meaning of the smile was as plain as words. It meant: "Well, really, you are excellent fellows, right good fellows, but 'pon my soul a d—d pair of fools; sending William O'Brien to Hawarden to negotiate with Mr. Gladstone! Delightful." Well, he simply smiled William O'Brien's plan out of existence, and stuck to his original proposal. Next day he went back to London, and I went with him.'

On January 9 Mr. O'Brien (who had been all the time in communication with Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Dillon) wired to Parnell from Boulogne: 'McCarthy and Sexton come to-day; difficulties with D.'

Parnell continued to stick with characteristic tenacity to his original position :

(1) Satisfactory assurances from the Liberals.

(2) Parnell and O'Brien alone to be judges of the satisfactoriness of the assurances.

Mr. O'Brien tried to persuade him to allow Mr. McCarthy to have a voice in deciding the question, but in vain.

*Mr. O'Brien to Parnell*

[TELEGRAM]

'Boulogne : January 18.

'Indications favourable, presume no objection to McCarthy's voice as to satisfactoriness of assurances if obtained.'

*Parnell to Mr. O'Brien*

[Limerick]

'While at all times willing to consult with McCarthy upon any points of special difficulty which may from time to time arise, I am obliged to ask that the terms of the memorandum shall be adhered to, which provide that you and I shall be the sole and final judges.'

On one point only Parnell gave way. He agreed finally to accept Mr. Dillon as chairman of the party.

While these letters and telegrams were passing Mr. O'Brien was in touch with the Liberal leaders, and towards the end of January he received assurances which he seems to have regarded as more or less satisfactory. By this time also Mr. Dillon had arrived in France from America, and on January 30 Mr. O'Brien wired to Parnell to come to Calais for further consultation.

*Mr. O'Brien to Parnell*

[TELEGRAM]

'January 30.

'Just received materials for final decision. Most important you should see [them] at once. If you could cross to Calais, or anywhere else to-night, would meet you with Dillon.'

Parnell went to Calais, and met Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Dillon. The Liberal assurances were then submitted to him, and he considered them unsatisfactory; but this was not the only trouble. Mr. O'Brien had looked forward with hope to the meeting between Parnell and Mr. Dillon. He believed the meeting would make for peace. He was woefully disappointed. Mr. Dillon succeeded completely in getting Parnell's back up, adding seriously to the difficulties of the situation. He seemed specially to have offended Parnell by proposing that he (Mr. Dillon) should have a voice in the distribution of the Paris funds. These funds were held by three trustees, of whom Parnell was one. It was agreed that any two of the trustees might draw on the funds, provided that Parnell was always one of the two. Mr. Dillon now proposed that the funds might be drawn without the intervention of Parnell; that, in fact, Mr. Dillon should take the place that Parnell had hitherto held. Parnell scornfully brushed aside this proposal, and broke off relations with Mr. Dillon altogether, though to the end he remained on friendly terms with Mr. O'Brien.

On February 4 he wrote to Dr. Kenny: 'I went to Calais on Monday night to see O'Brien; he had received the draft of a letter proposed to be written,

and purporting to meet my requirements, but I found it of an illusory character, and think that I succeeded in showing him that it was so. He will endeavour to obtain the necessary amendments to the draft.'

The Calais meeting seems to have been a turning point in the negotiations, and Parnell's next letter—a masterpiece in diplomatic *finesse*—was couched in less conciliatory terms. It was addressed to Mr. Gill, an Anti-Parnellite Irish member, who was a channel of communication between Mr. O'Brien and Parnell, and between Mr. Morley and Mr. O'Brien.

*Parnell to Mr. Gill*

'February 5, 1891.

'MY DEAR GILL,—I have carefully considered the position created by the information conveyed to me by you yesterday, as to the new proposals and demands of the Liberal leaders, and it appears to me to be a very grave one, and to add materially to the difficulties attending a peaceable solution. You will remember that under the memorandum of agreement arrived at between O'Brien and myself more than a month since at Boulogne it was provided that the judgment as to whether the intentions of Mr. Gladstone were in accordance upon certain vital points with the views expressed in that agreement was to be given by myself and O'Brien acting in conjunction, and that I have since felt myself obliged to decline a proposal from O'Brien to add another person to our number for the performance of that duty. In addition you are aware that last Tuesday I met O'Brien at Calais for the purpose of coming to a final decision with him as to the sufficiency of a draft memorandum respecting the views of the Liberal leaders which he had obtained,



and which, although at first sight it appeared to him to be sufficient, after a consultation with me was found to require considerable alteration and modification in order to secure the necessary guarantees regarding the vital points in question.

‘ You now inform me that a new condition is insisted upon for the continuance of further negotiations—viz. that the question of the sufficiency of the guarantee is to be decided upon by O’Brien apart from me, and in conjunction with I know not whom, that he is to see the draft of the proposed public statement, and that he must bind himself to accept it as satisfactory before it is published, while I am not to be permitted to see it, to judge of its satisfactory character, or to have a voice in the grave and weighty decision which O’Brien and certain unknown persons were thus called upon to give on my behalf as well as his own. I desire to say that I fully recognise the candour which O’Brien has shown in this matter, and the absence of any disposition on his part to depart either from the spirit or the letter of our agreement without my knowledge and consent. It is unnecessary for me to enlarge upon the humiliating and disgraceful position in which this fresh attempt at exaction on the part of the Liberal leaders would seem intended to place me. It suffices to say that my own self-respect—nor, I am confident, that of the Irish people—would permit me to occupy it for a single moment. Besides this consideration, I could not, with any regard for my public responsibility and declarations upon the vital points in reference to which assurances are required, surrender into unknown hands, or even into the hands of O’Brien, my right as to the sufficiency of those assurances and guarantees. But within the last twenty hours information of a most startling

character has reached me from a reliable source, which may render it necessary for me to widen my position in these negotiations. It will be remembered that during the Hawarden communication the one point of the form upon which the views of the Liberal leaders were not definitely and clearly conveyed to me was that regarding the question of the retention of the Irish members at Westminster. It was represented to me that the unanimous opinion was in favour of permanently retaining a reduced number, thirty-four, as the symbol of Imperial unity, but not with a view of affording grounds, occasions, or pretexts for Imperial interference in Irish national concerns, it being held most properly that the permanent retention of a large number would afford such grounds.

‘But from the information recently conveyed to me referred to above, it would appear that this decision has been reconsidered, and that it is now most probable that the Irish members in their full strength will be permanently retained. This prospect, following so closely upon the orders of the “Pall Mall Gazette” that it must be so, is ominous and most alarming.

‘In 1886 the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, as I can prove by documentary evidence, was lost because the Liberal leaders declined till too late to agree to the retention of any Irish members in any shape or for any purpose. This resolve was formed because the Irish party from 1880 to 1885 have proved their independence, courage, and steadiness on many a hard-fought field, and it was felt necessary to get rid of them at any cost. But the majority of the party of to-day having lost their independence and proved their devotion to the Liberal leaders, it is considered desirable to keep them permanently at Westminster for the

purpose of English Radicalism, and as a standing pretext for the exercise of the veto of the Imperial Parliament over the legislation of the Irish body.

'I refrain at present from going further into the matter, but will conclude by saying that so long as the degrading condition referred to at the commencement of this letter is insisted upon by the Liberal leaders, I do not see how I can be a party to the further progress of the negotiations.

'My dear Gill,

'Yours very truly,

'CHAS. S. PARNELL.'

Mr. Gill replied instantly, praying for an 'immediate interview,' and saying that the 'first part of your letter is founded on a misunderstanding which I can remove.'

Parnell answered :

*Parnell to Mr. Gill*

February 6, '91.

MY DEAR GILL,—I have your letter of last night, and note that you say that the first part of mine to you of yesterday is founded on a misunderstanding which you can remove. Although I cannot see where there is any room on my part for misunderstanding the information which you conveyed, I shall be very glad if it should turn out as you say, and in that case of course the negotiations could be resumed. Will you, then, kindly write and explain what the misunderstanding was and how you think it can be removed, as I fear it may not be possible for me to see you at the House of Commons this evening?

'Yours very truly,

'CHAS. S. PARNELL.'

Mr. Gill wrote once more saying that he knew 'nothing whatever about these conditions and proposals on the part of the Liberal leaders of which you speak'; adding, 'if anything I said in our conversation led you to form such an impression, it was an entire misapprehension, arising possibly out of my own eagerness in hoping that these prolonged negotiations might be brought to an end as quickly as possible without further delay.'

Parnell replied:

*Parnell to Mr. Gill*

February 7, '91.

'MY DEAR GILL,—I am writing O'Brien by this evening's post upon the subject of our conversation on Wednesday, and for the present perhaps it would be better that the negotiations should be conducted by correspondence between himself and me. As regards your note just received, I am sorry that I cannot agree with you that it gives at all an accurate account of the information you then conveyed to me, although while you expressly stated the conditions, new to me, of the Liberal leaders, I agree that you did not say that you spoke to me on behalf of them or at their request, nor did I so intimate in my letter of Thursday.

'Sincerely yours,

'CHAS. S. PARNELL.'

On February 8 Mr. O'Brien wrote to Parnell: 'There is not a shadow of foundation for the story which appears to have reached you of new proposals and demands of the Liberal leaders.' On February 9 he wrote again, saying: 'What a woeful thing it would be if negotiations were broken off "under

the influence of a misunderstanding for which there is not the smallest shred or shadow of foundation," speaking of the 'atrocious calumnies' to which he had been subjected for trying to 'preserve you from humiliation,' deploring the 'unspeakably sad and tragic' turn affairs had taken, and weeping over the 'terrible state of things that is before the country.'

The Chief replied impassively :

*Parnell to Mr. O'Brien*

February 10, '91.

'MY DEAR O'BRIEN,—I have received your kind notes of the 8th and 9th instant, and I fully join with you in the expression regarding the unhappy situation that would be created if the negotiations were to be broken off owing to any misunderstanding. But I have been much desirous since Wednesday of ascertaining the nature of the alleged misunderstanding, with a view to its removal, and up to the present have entirely failed in obtaining any light, either from your letters or those of Gill. Perhaps, however, I can facilitate matters by relating as clearly as possible what it was that fell from the latter at our second interview on Wednesday, which gave rise to my letter of Thursday. You will remember that as requested by your telegram of Friday week, advising me that you had obtained the materials for a final decision, I met you at Calais on Monday week for the purpose of joining you in coming to a decision as to whether the intentions of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were in accordance with the views expressed in my original memorandum of agreement with you. You then showed me a memorandum which you stated was the substance of a public letter which Mr. Gladstone was willing to write, con-

veying the assurance regarding the questions of the constabulary and the land. You seemed of opinion that such a letter in such terms would satisfy my conditions. But I was obliged to differ from you, and hoped that I had been so fortunate as to convince you of the reasonable character of my objections, for you asked me to amend the memorandum in such a way as to cause it to carry out my views on the subject of the constabulary. This was done, and it was arranged that I should meet Gill in London the next day for the purpose of further considering the land branch, and to confirm that portion referring to the constabulary after reference to the statutes. It was at this interview that the origin of the present trouble arose. In speaking of the future course of the negotiations, I understood Gill to state distinctly that the Liberal leaders required to be assured that you would be satisfied with their proposed declaration before they made it, and that I was not to see the memorandum or know the particulars of the document upon which your judgment was to be given. I assumed that you would receive a memorandum as at Calais, on which you would be required to form and announce your judgment apart from me. I do not know whether I am entitled to put you any questions, but if you think not do not hesitate to decline to answer them. Are you expected to form your judgment on the sufficiency of the proposed assurances before they are made public? If so, what materials and of what character do you expect to receive for this purpose? And will you be able to share with me the facilities thus afforded to you, so that we may, if possible, come to a joint decision?

‘Is it true, as indicated by a portion of your letter of the 8th, that you have already formed an affirmative

opinion as to the sufficiency of the memorandum you showed to me at Calais? I have not time at present to advert to what I consider the great change produced in the situation by several of the pastoral letters of the members of the hierarchy just published. They create great doubts in my mind as to whether the peace we are struggling for is at all possible, and as to whether we are not compelled to face even greater and larger issues than those yet raised in this trouble.

‘Yours very truly,

‘CHAS. S. PARNELL.’

A short time afterwards the negotiations were broken off, and Mr. Dillon and Mr. O’Brien returned to England. They were immediately arrested and lodged in Galway Gaol, where they remained, without giving any sign, for four or five months. At the end of that time they came out and declared against Parnell. So the Boulogne negotiations—the ‘so-called negotiations,’ as a distinguished Liberal scornfully said to me—came to an end; not, however, until the Liberal leaders had given some assurances anent the forthcoming Home Rule Bill. These assurances were in the following terms: (1) The land question was either to be settled by the Imperial Parliament simultaneously with the establishment of Home Rule or within a limited period thereafter to be specified in the Home Rule Bill, or the power to deal with it was to be given to the Irish Parliament. (2) The Irish constabulary was to be converted by degrees, within a period not to exceed five years, into a purely civil force under the complete control of the Irish Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The question has been raised whether Parnell meant

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, 1891.

business in these Boulogne conferences; whether he went into the negotiations with the intention of making peace, or only for strategic purposes in carrying on the war. I asked an Anti-Parnellite who was concerned in the negotiations to give me his opinion on the point. He said it was perhaps hard to tell; but on the whole he inclined to the view that there were moments when Parnell meant peace, and that again there were moments when he used the negotiations merely for strategic purposes. Other Anti-Parnellites were of opinion that the Chief was playing a strategic game all the time, and playing it with his accustomed skill.

What was his strategy? To divide the Anti-Parnellite forces (1) by drawing Dillon and O'Brien away from Healy; (2) by drawing O'Brien away from Dillon; (3) by out-manœuvring the three in detail; (4) by involving the Liberals in fresh difficulties and bringing them into collision with their Irish allies. In the first object he succeeded completely. Healy's voice was for war *à outrance*, and accordingly the Boulogne negotiations led to the opening of the breach between him and Dillon and O'Brien which has not been closed to this day. In the second object he failed, for O'Brien and Dillon stood together to the end. But he scored a success in another way. Very many people believed that O'Brien was really on the side of Parnell, and that the relations between himself and Dillon were strained if not sundered.

When both went into gaol it was generally thought that O'Brien was a Parnellite and Dillon an Anti-Parnellite. O'Brien's ultimate declaration against Parnell on leaving gaol caused a revulsion of popular feeling against him which he has not recovered yet. Some said: 'Why did he pose as the friend of Parnell and



désert the Chief in the end?' Others said: 'Why did he waste time over these Boulogne negotiations? If he were not a fool he would have known that nothing could have come of them.' One set of people lost faith in his heart, another lost faith in his head. To this hour the Boulogne negotiations are a stick with which Mr. Healy never fails to flagellate Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien. The 'fighting Catholic curates' were driven to Mr. Healy's side by what was called the Boulogne fiasco more than by anything else. 'Some of the seceders,' said Parnell with bitter scorn—'the majority of them—have changed only twice; Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien have changed four times.'

The Liberal leaders looked upon Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien as a pair of simpletons for allowing themselves to be drawn into negotiations with the most superb political strategist of the day, Mr. Gladstone alone excepted. But this was not the worst. There seemed a possibility that the Liberals might be caught in the net which Mr. O'Brien was so innocently helping Parnell to spread. The Liberal tactics were, of course, obvious; Parnell was to be isolated, and O'Brien and Dillon were to be kept out of his hands. The Liberals ultimately succeeded in drawing Dillon and O'Brien out of Parnell's hands, though in so doing they were forced to give assurances which would certainly never have been obtained but for the skilful operations of the Chief.

I saw Parnell frequently during the Boulogne negotiations, and indeed throughout the whole of this last campaign. One evening in the House of Commons I said to him: 'People don't believe in these Boulogne negotiations; they say that you are talking of peace, but that you mean war all the time.' 'Oh, indeed,' he replied, smiling, 'do they? Well, you know if you

want peace you must be ready for war. We must show these people that we are not afraid to fight.'

Another evening at Euston I said to him: 'You want a definite statement from Mr. Gladstone about the next Home Rule Bill——.' 'In writing,' he interpolated. 'Suppose you get it, what will you do?' 'I will tell you that when I read the statement.' I said: 'It is difficult for you to retire now. You might have retired of your own accord—you might have retired at the request of your own people; you cannot retire at the demand of an Englishman. The divorce case is not the issue now. The issue is, whether an Englishman, no matter how friendly, can veto the decision of an Irish party, whether the decision is right or wrong.' 'That is the issue,' he said.

I said: 'You have contracted fresh obligations too. Men who do not belong to your party have come in to help you to fight out this issue; you cannot treat over their heads.' He answered: 'I will consider every man who has helped me in whatever I do.' Afterwards he added: 'Some good may come out of these negotiations. We may pin the Liberals to something definite yet.'

## CHAPTER XXVI

## NEARING THE END

WHILE the Boulogne negotiations were proceeding Parnell continued to carry on the war in Ireland; he rested not a day, not an hour. Every Saturday night he left London for Dublin. On Sunday he addressed a meeting in some part of the country. On Monday he was back in Dublin again to confer with his followers there, and to direct operations. On Tuesday he returned to London, attended occasionally at the House of Commons, crossed when necessary to Boulogne, sometimes addressed meetings in England, and on Saturday started afresh to Ireland.

‘You are over-doing it,’ I said to him one night when he looked fatigued and harassed. ‘Yes,’ he rejoined, ‘I am doing the work of ten men; but (suddenly) I feel right well. It does me good.’ There was nothing that displeased him more than the least suggestion that he could not stand this constant strain.

In April there was an election in North Sligo. Parnell put up a candidate; but he was beaten, after a fierce fight, though not by so large a majority as the Anti-Parnellites had commanded in Kilkenny. In July there was another election in Carlow. Parnell again put up a candidate, and he was again beaten. But these defeats did not relax his efforts. After the

Carlow election he delivered a stirring speech, bidding his followers to be of good cheer and never to despair.

‘If,’ he said, ‘we should happen to be beaten at the next general election, we will form a solid rallying square of the 1,500 good men who voted for Ireland’s nationhood in the County Carlow, of the 2,500 heroes who voted for the same cause in North Sligo, and of the 1,400 voters in North Kilkenny who stood by the flag of Irish independence.’<sup>1</sup>

I saw him often in London during his flying visits, when he received reports and gave directions about the Parnellite organisation in England. Sometimes he was little disposed to talk, on other occasions he was unusually conversational.

One evening we sat together in the Smoking-room of the House of Commons. He smoked a cigar, sipped a cup of tea or coffee, and looked restful and almost genial. When the business which I had come to talk about was disposed of, he said suddenly and *à propos* of nothing, ‘What do you think of English alliances?’ I said that I thought an Irish alliance with an English party was a mistake, for the English party and for the Irish. I referred to the case of O’Connell’s alliance with the Melbourne Ministry. He said, ‘I know nothing about that. I am very ignorant.’ I smiled. ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘I mean what I say. I am very

<sup>1</sup> ‘I have a recollection of Mr. Parnell at the Carlow election,’ says Mr. Patrick O’Brien, M.P. ‘I repeated to him one of the election ballads. “Oh!” said he, “you must sing it.” I had been speaking all day, and I was as hoarse as an old crow, but he insisted, and I had to sing it as well as I could. Next day there was a meeting in the market place. I made a speech, and in the course of it referred to the ballad again. It was very spicy, and I quoted the first verse. Parnell turned round and said: “Sing it, sing it.” Of course I refused, but he kept poking me in the ribs all the time, saying: “Sing it,” and a number of fellows on the platform, seeing he was bent on it, joined him. But I held out. The whole thing seemed to have amused him immensely.’

ignorant of these things. I have read very little, but I am smart, and can pick up information quickly. Whatever you tell me about O'Connell you will find I will remember.' I then told him the story of the Melbourne alliance, so far as I was able; pointing out how it had ended in O'Connell's plunging into repeal, and in the Liberals afterwards fighting shy of Irish questions until the Fenian outbreak. The upshot of the alliance, I said, was that O'Connell lost faith in the British Parliament, and the Liberals felt that they had burned their fingers over Ireland, and accordingly tried to keep clear of the subject in the future. 'I agree,' he said; 'an English alliance is no use. It is a mistake to negotiate with an Englishman. He knows the business better than you do. He has had better training, and he is sure, sooner or later, to get you on a bit of toast. You must keep within your own lines and be always ready to fight until you get what you want. I gained nothing by meeting Mr. Gladstone. I was no match for him. He got more out of me than I ever got out of him.' 'Why,' I asked, 'did you make a close alliance with the Liberals in 1886?' 'Some change had to be made,' he answered. 'You see, they had come round to Home Rule. We could not go on fighting them as we did before their surrender.' 'But then, a close alliance was a mistake,' I said; 'even a Liberal said to me that it would have been better for the Irish and the Liberals to have moved on parallel lines than on the same line.' 'I did not,' he answered, 'want a close alliance. I did not make a close alliance. I kept away from the Liberals as much as I could. You do not know how much they tried to get at me, how much I was worried. But I tried to keep away from them as much as I had ever done. I knew the danger of getting

mixed up with English statesmen. They only make you give way, and I gave way a great deal too much.' 'Your people made a close alliance with the Liberals,' I said. 'I could not help that,' he answered. 'They ought to have known my wishes. They knew all the time I had been in public life I avoided Englishmen. I did not want them to rush into English clubs, or into English Society, as it is called. You talk of O'Connell. What would O'Connell have done in my position?' I answered: 'The difference between you and O'Connell is, that he always remained at the wheel; you often let others run the ship.' 'Ah!' he replied with energy, 'that was my mistake, I admit it. I have not denied my faults. I committed many mistakes; that was the greatest. They call me a dictator. I was not dictator enough. I allowed them to do too much. But (clenching his fist and placing it quietly on the table) that will not happen again. It is called my party. It is everybody's party more than mine. I suppose you think that I have nominated every member of the party. I have not; other people nominated them. Look at —— (nodding his head towards an Irish member who sat some distance from us). How did he get into Parliament? I will tell you. C—— (nodding his head in the direction of another Irish member), C—— came to me and said, "Mr. —— (I had never heard of him before) would make a useful member. He is a Protestant, he is a landlord, he is an Oxford man, and he is a good speaker. He would be useful in the English constituencies." "Well," I said, "take him," and that was how Mr. —— came into Parliament. I dare say he makes pretty speeches, and I suppose he thinks himself a great Irish representative. I could give you other cases of the same kind. Most

of those men got in in this way.' I said: 'Still you are responsible. All these men owe their political existence to you.' 'I admit my responsibility. I am telling you what was the practice. I did not build up a party of personal adherents. I took the nominees of others,' he rejoined. 'I do not say I was blameless. I have never said it. But was I to have no rest, was I to be always on the watch?' I broke in: 'A dictator can have no rest, he must be always on the watch.' Without heeding the interruption, he went on, as was his wont, to finish his own train of thought: 'Was no allowance to be made for me? I can assure you I am a man always ready to make allowances for everyone.' He then shook the ashes from his cigar, stood up, and without another word walked out on the Terrace.

Parnell was right. There was no man more ready to make allowances, no man more ready to forgive and to forget. A member of the party had (in the days before the split) grossly insulted him. This individual was subsequently driven out of the National ranks, though not for this reason, but for his Whig leanings. Afterwards it was suggested that he should be brought back. Parnell at once accepted the suggestion. 'Parnell was quite willing,' this ex-M.P. said to me, 'to take me back, but Healy and Dillon objected, and the matter was let drop.' During the Special Commission it was suggested that Mr. Healy (for whom Parnell could have had no love after the Galway election) should hold a brief. Parnell consented at once. But Davitt strongly objected, and the suggestion was not, therefore, carried out. 'Healy,' said an old Fenian to Parnell, 'seems to have the best political head of all these people.' 'He has the only political head among them,' rejoined Parnell.

In some of his speeches Parnell had made personal attacks on Mr. Gladstone. I thought these attacks undeserved and told him so. He said: 'What have I said?' I replied, 'You remember as well as I.' 'I called him an old gentleman,' he said. 'Well, he is an old gentleman; there is no harm in that.' I said: 'I wish you would take this matter seriously.' 'Well, but,' he repeated, 'what have I said? What have I called him? Tell me.' 'Well,' I rejoined—'you will probably smile, but it is not, after all, a smiling matter—you called him "a grand old spider."' I met Morley (who is not unfriendly to you) in the Lobby and he said, "Do you think I can have anything to do with a man who called Mr. Gladstone 'a grand old spider'?"' Parnell smiled and answered: 'I think that is complimentary—spinning all kinds of webs and devices, that's just what he does.' I said: 'I wish you would take this matter seriously. It is really unworthy of you. No man has avoided personalities all these years more than you. Why should you descend to them now?' Parnell (angrily): 'You all come to me to complain. I am fighting with my back to the wall, and every blow I hit is criticised by my friends. You all forget how I am attacked. You only come to find fault with me. You are all against me.' I said: 'I do not think you ought to say that. If I were against you I would not be here. I do not come as Mr. Gladstone's friend; I come as yours, because I feel it is unworthy of you.' 'You are right,' he said, suddenly placing his hand on my shoulder; 'personal abuse is wrong. I have said these things and forgotten them as soon as I have said them. But you are right in talking about it.'

Upon another occasion I said that Mr. Gladstone deserved well of Ireland, adding, 'Almost all that has



been done for Ireland in my time has been done by Mr. Gladstone—Gladstone *plus* Fenianism, and *plus* you.' We then talked about the Fenians and separation. I said: 'Every Irish Nationalist would go for separation if he thought he could get it; we are all Home Rulers because we do not believe separation is possible.' After a pause he said, showing no disposition to continue the subject: 'I have never gone for separation. I never said I would. The physical force men understand my position very well. I made it clear to them that I would be satisfied with a Parliament, and that I believed in our constitutional movement; but I also said that if our constitutional movement failed, I could not then stand in the way of any man who wished to go further and to try other means. That was the position I always took up. I have never changed, and I still believe in our constitutional movement. I believe that with our own Parliament, if England does not meddle, we can build up our country.' I said: '—,' naming an old Fenian, 'says that there has been too much land and too little nationality in your movement all the time.' 'Does he suggest,' rejoined Parnell, with a slight touch of sarcasm, 'that the land should have been neglected?' 'No,' I rejoined, 'but he thinks that you allowed it to overshadow the National movement.'

*Parnell.* 'That could not have been helped. Remember the crisis of 1879. There was distress and famine; the tenants rushed the movement. Besides, the claims of the tenants were just in themselves, and ought to have been taken up.' 'The Fenians,' I said, 'are the real Nationalist force in Ireland.' 'That is true,' he rejoined.

One of our last talks was about the Liberal leaders and the progress of Home Rule in England. He

spoke of the seceders. 'What do they expect?' he said. 'Do they think that Home Rule is so near that anyone may carry it through now?' I replied: 'That is what they do think. I heard that one of them said: "The ship has crossed the ocean. She is coming into port. Anyone can do the rest."' A faint smile was the only response. 'Do they think,' he continued, 'that the Liberal leaders will carry Home Rule? I say nothing about Mr. Gladstone now, but remember Mr. Gladstone is an old man. He cannot live for ever. I agree that he means to establish some kind of Irish Parliament. What kind? That is the question I have always raised. He will be satisfied if he gives us any kind of Parliament. He is an old man, and he cannot wait. I am a young man, and I can afford to wait. I want a Parliament that we shall be able to keep and to work for our country, and if we do not get it this year or next I can wait for half a dozen years; but it must be a real Parliament when it comes. I grant you all you say about Mr. Gladstone's power and intentions to establish a Parliament of some kind, but Home Rule will not come in his time. We have to look to his successors. Depend upon it I am saying what is true. Who will be his successors? Who are the gentlemen whom the seceders trust? Name them to me, and I will tell you what I think.'

I named Mr. Morley. 'Yes,' said Parnell, 'Mr. Morley has a good record. I have always said that. But has Mr. Morley any influence in England? Do you think that Mr. Morley has the power to carry Home Rule? Will England follow him? Will the Liberal party follow him? I do not think that Morley has any following in the country.'

I said: 'Well, there is Asquith. He is a coming

man. Some people say he may be the Liberal leader of the future.'

*Parnell.* 'Yes, Mr. Asquith is a coming man, a very clever man; but (looking me straight in the face) do you think Mr. Asquith is very keen about Home Rule? Do you think that he will risk anything for Home Rule? Mr. Asquith won't trouble about Home Rule, take my word for that.'

I said: 'There is Campbell-Bannerman. I hear that he is a very good fellow, and he made about as good an Irish Secretary as any of them.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I dare say he is a very good fellow, and as an Irish Secretary he left things alone (with a droll smile)—a sensible thing for an Irish Secretary. If they do not know anything they had better do nothing.' I said: 'The most objectionable Englishman is the Englishman who suddenly wakes up and imagines he has discovered Ireland—the man who comes to you and says: "You know I was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone."''

*Parnell.* 'Indeed, do they say that?'

'Oh yes,' I replied. 'The first time I met Hugh Price Hughes he said: "Why, you know I was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone.'"'

*Parnell* (passing over this irrelevant remark) said: 'But do you think that Campbell-Bannerman has any influence? He is not going to lead the Liberal party. I think he has no influence.'

I said: 'Lord Rosebery. He has influence.'

*Parnell.* 'I know nothing about Lord Rosebery. Probably he has influence. But do you think he is going to use it for Home Rule? Do you think he knows anything about Home Rule or cares anything about it?'

I said : ' Sir William Harcourt.'

*Parnell.* ' Ah, now you have come to the point. I have been waiting for that.' Then, turning fully round and facing me, he continued : ' What do you think of Sir William Harcourt? He will be the Liberal leader when Mr. Gladstone goes. Do you think he will trouble himself about Home Rule? He will think only of getting his party together, and he will take up any question that will best help him to do that. Mark what I say. Sir William Harcourt will have to be fought again.'

' Do you think,' I asked, ' that the Home Rule movement, the movement for an Irish Parliament, has made any real progress in England?'

' It has taken no root,' he answered, ' but our movement has made some progress.'

' The land question,' I said, ' has made progress. The labour movement here has helped it; the cry against coercion has told. But has the demand for an Irish Parliament made way? Do the English electors understand it? Do they really know the difference between Home Rule and Local Government? I doubt it.'

He said : ' I think we are hammering it into them by degrees. You must never expect the English to be enthusiastic about Home Rule. I have always said that. But they are beginning to see the difficulties of governing Ireland. They find they cannot do it, and Home Rule must come out of that.'

' Well,' I said, ' I do not know that. If Mr. Gladstone were to say to-morrow that Local Government would do after all, they would turn round at once and say that Home Rule and Local Government were the same thing.'

' Yes,' he said, ' that is true; but we have only to

keep pounding away and to take care that they do not go back. They will not work it out in the way you think. They will find Ireland impossible to govern, and then they will give us what we want. That is what will happen. We must show them our power. They will bow to nothing but power, I assure you. If we hold together there is nothing that we cannot do in that House.'

I said: 'Hold together! There is an end to that for a long time. It will take you ten years to pull the country together again.'

'No,' he rejoined very quietly; 'I will do it in five years—that is what I calculate.'

'Well, Gladstone will be dead then,' I said. 'The whole question to me is, you and Mr. Gladstone. If you both go, Home Rule will go with you for this generation.'

'But I will not go,' he answered angrily; 'I am a young man, and I will not go.' And there was a fierce flash in his eyes which was not pleasant to look at.

The fight went on, and not a ray of hope shone upon Parnell's path. In Ireland the Fenians rallied everywhere to his standard, but the whole power of the Church was used to crush him. In June he married Mrs. O'Shea, and a few weeks later 'young' Mr. Gray,<sup>1</sup> of the 'Freeman's Journal,' seized upon the marriage as a pretext for going over to the enemy, because it was against the law of the Catholic Church to marry a divorced woman. But Parnell, amid all reverses, never lost heart. On the defection of the 'Freeman's Journal' he set immediately to work to found a new morning paper—'The Irish Daily Independent.' He still continued to traverse the country,

<sup>1</sup> Son of Mr. Dwyer Gray, M.P., who died in 1888.

cheering his followers, and showing a bold front to his foes. At moments he had fits of depression and melancholy. He did not wish to be alone. He would often—a most unusual thing for him—talk for talking's sake. He would walk the streets of Dublin with a follower far into the night, rather than sit in his hotel by himself. Mr. Patrick O'Brien, M.P., has given me an interesting account of Parnell in one of his sad and gloomy moods :

‘I saw a good deal of him during the last campaign. He used often to feel very lonely, and never wished to be long by himself. One afternoon we had been at the National League together. Afterwards we returned to Parnell's hotel—Morrison's. While we were dining an English lady was sitting near us at another table. She had a little dog, and was putting him through various tricks. But the favourite trick was this. She made the dog stand on his hind legs, and then said, “Now, Tot, cheer for the Queen”; whereupon the dog would bark. This tickled Parnell very much. He would wink at me and say in his quiet, shy way: “I think this is intended for us.” He asked me to stay to dinner. I had, as a matter of fact, made an appointment with his sister, Mrs. Dickinson, to take her to the opera to see Madame —, and after the dinner I was anxious to get away to meet Mrs. Dickinson. I did not tell Parnell anything about the matter, because I thought he would not care to come to the theatre, and would not be bothered about it generally. He saw that I was anxious to get away, and he said: “Do you want to get away? If you have nothing special to do, I should like you to stop with me, as I feel rather lonely.”

‘I then said: “Well, the fact is, Mr. Parnell, I am thinking of going to the theatre.”

“Oh,” he said, “it is twenty-four years since I was at a theatre, and I think I should like to go.”

‘I said: “Very well. Shall I get places for both of us?” and he said: “Yes, I think I should like to go.”’

‘I then went off to the National League, very glad, because I thought I should have a surprise both for Mrs. Dickinson and Parnell, as neither would expect the other to come. When I got to the National League I found a telegram from Mrs. Dickinson’s daughter saying her mother had been out hunting, and that there was no chance of her being back in time to come to the theatre. I then returned to Parnell, and we both set off for the Gaiety. The place was tremendously full, and when I came to the box-office the box-keeper looked out and saw Parnell standing in the doorway. He said to me: “Is that the Chief?”’

‘I said: “Yes.”’

‘He said: “Then he wants to come in?”’

‘I said: “Yes.”’

“Well,” said he, “the house is full, but he must come in no matter what happens.” We then went to the dress circle, getting a front place. Parnell’s appearance created quite a sensation. The opera had just commenced, but people kept turning round constantly, looking at him. He got a book of the opera, and seemed to follow the performance with great interest, making remarks to me now and then when he was pleased. As soon as the curtain fell on the first act everyone turned round—stalls, dress circle, pit, boxes—to level their opera-glasses at him. A number of men—high Tories—came out of the stalls and walked along the passage at the back of the circle, looking at him through the glass partition.

‘He seemed quite unconscious of all this. There was no cheering, but a murmur of satisfaction and great curiosity. When the opera was over a tremendous crowd collected outside to watch him leave. He said to me: “Now we shall go away.” He had not the most remote conception of the excitement which his presence caused, and he thought he might walk away as an ordinary spectator; but the truth was all the passages were blocked, and the street was simply impassable in front.

‘I said: “Well, the fact is, Mr. Parnell, you cannot get away unless you walk on the heads of the people outside.”

‘He smiled and said, “Oh, very well, we will wait if you like, or perhaps there may be a secret way by which we can get out.”

‘There was a secret way, and the officials of the theatre got us out by a side door, and so we escaped the throng. As we walked along Grafton Street he said: “I remember there used to be a very good oyster shop somewhere here; let us go and have some oysters.” We could not find out the shop, though I discovered afterwards it was Bailey’s. However, I knew another supper place, and we went there. The manager of the place was delighted to see Parnell. We walked upstairs, and had a room to ourselves. The manager asked Parnell to put his name in his autograph book. Parnell said, “Certainly,” and when he opened the book the first name that caught his eye, amid a host of celebrities, was his mother’s. “Oh,” said he, “has my mother been here too?” as he signed his name.

‘We remained until two in the morning.

‘We then walked to Morrison’s, and I bade him



good-bye, and prepared to set out for the National Club. Parnell said: "Well, I think I will walk with you to the National Club," and away we went. When we got to the National Club, of course I returned to Morrison's with Parnell, and when we got there he said: "I think I will come back with you to the National Club again." "Well, Mr. Parnell," I said, "if you do, we will keep walking about the streets all the night." He said: "I do not care; I do not like to be alone." However, I insisted on his going to Morrison's, and went off to the Club.'

In September Parnell addressed a meeting in the County Kerry, where he was the guest of Mr. Pierce Mahony, M.P., who has given me some reminiscences of his visit:

'Parnell was a very pleasant man in a house; he spent two nights with us in Kerry during the split. He was very homely. He would like to sit over the fire at night, and talk. He used to talk more during the split than ever before. He was very observant about a house, noticed everything, especially whether the house was warm or not; that was the first thing he noticed. "Your house is nice and warm, Mahony, I like it;" that was the first thing he said when he came. We walked about the fields. I prided myself on having my hedges very neat. After looking around everything he said: "You are very fond of English hedges." I was very much amused. That was the sole commentary on my hedges. He was very fond of children and dogs. He took a particular fancy to one of my boys: Dermot, aged 15. Parnell was, of course, very superstitious. He would not dine thirteen at table. One day a man disappointed us at a dinner party, and we had just thirteen; so we sent

Dermot to dine by himself. This troubled Parnell, and he kept constantly saying at dinner, "That boy ought not to have been sent away." Finally, as soon as Dermot scrambled through his dinner, we sent for him, and gave him a chair away from the table. Parnell laughed at this compromise, and chatted to Dermot, and asked him what he thought of the meeting (at which Parnell had spoken). Dermot said he liked it very much, particularly the fight. Whereupon Parnell said, looking at us all: "Oh, I saw that fight too. It was in the middle of my speech, and made me feel quite nervous and irritable—one fellow took such a long time to hit the other!"

Throughout the latter months of 1891 the relations between himself and Mr. Justin McCarthy were friendly. 'During the fight of 1891,' says Mr. McCarthy, 'Parnell and I used frequently to meet, and we were always friendly to each other. We had business transactions about the evicted tenants to settle. We were joint trustees. One day we drove in a hansom cab to the House of Commons and entered the Lobby in friendly talk, greatly to the surprise of the members there. One night he came to my house, looking pale and haggard. We sat over the fire, and talked away on various subjects, but made no allusion to the split. When Parnell was going, and just as we stood at the door together, he said: "I am going to the Euston hotel to get a few hours' sleep. I start for Ireland in the morning." I said: "Parnell, are you not over-doing this. No constitution can stand the work you are going through."

"Oh, yes," he said, "I like it. It is doing me a lot of good!" These were the last words I heard him speak.'

Mr. Russell, a Dublin journalist, has also given me some reminiscences of this time :

‘I saw Parnell frequently,’ he says, ‘during the last eleven months of his life. I went with him to the Limerick meeting. I met him at King’s Bridge. He had just arrived from London. We travelled together in the same carriage to Limerick. He said: “I am very tired. I was up until four o’clock this morning signing cheques with Justin McCarthy, and I want to have a sleep. If there should be people at the stations as we go along, do you talk to them. Tell them that I’m tired and unwell, and that I’m taking a rest; unless there is a big crowd, then call me.” There were small gatherings of people at the stations as we came along, and I did as he had asked me. When we got to Thurles there was a big crowd. I put my hand on his shoulder and said: “Mr. Parnell, Thurles!” He sprang to his feet at once, put his head through the window, and said: “Men of Tipperary!” dashing off a very effective little speech. The quickness with which he did the thing astonished me. He did not pause for a moment. He might have been awake all the time preparing the speech. He got a great reception in Limerick. He spoke from Cruise’s Hotel, and insisted on standing right out on the window sill, while a couple of people inside the room held him by the coat tail.’

I saw Parnell for the last time towards the end of the summer, at Euston Station. He was starting on his weekly visit to Ireland. I was at the station by appointment to talk over some business matters with him. He arrived about ten minutes before the train started. Having despatched the business in his quiet ready way, not in the least disturbed by the bustle on the platform or the

fact that the train would be off in a very short time, he said, quietly and leisurely, 'I should like to know what you think will be the result of the General Election?' I answered: 'I should think that you will come back with about five followers, and I should not be surprised if you came back absolutely alone.' 'Well,' he answered impassively, 'if I do come back absolutely alone, one thing is certain, I shall then represent a party whose independence will not be sapped.' At this point the guard blew his whistle and the train began to move. 'Ah,' said Parnell, 'the train is going,' and, without the least hurry, he walked quietly forward. Several porters rushed up and said: 'Where is your carriage, Mr. Parnell?' He said, 'I have no carriage.' Then a door was opened; the guard said: 'Will you get in here, Mr. Parnell?' 'No,' said he. 'I don't like that.' Then another carriage door was opened. 'No,' said he, 'I don't like that.' The idea of his being left behind seemed never to have occurred to him. The train was slowed down. Parnell walked along, passing one or two carriages; then suddenly he peeped into one, where he saw Mr. Carew, M.P. 'Ah,' said he, 'there is Carew; I'll get in here.' The train by this time was stopped. He got in. Then the train started again; and he lowered the window, and, with a pleasant smile lighting up his pale sad face, waved me a last adieu.

His sister, Mrs. Dickinson, accompanied him to many meetings during this campaign.

'I saw a good deal of him,' she says, 'during the split. I went to meetings with him. I was at one of his last meetings—at Cabinteely. He was in good spirits, and seemed confident of ultimate success. My daughter, of whom he was very fond, was with us. We drove in a

closed carriage to the place of meeting. The people gathered round the carriage in their eagerness to see him, and broke the windows. I thought that a very bad omen, and so did he. He did not say anything, but I could see by his face that the breaking of the glass disturbed him. We always thought it unlucky to break glass. The meeting was very successful, but it rained all the time, and he spoke with his head uncovered. He was, however, greatly pleased with the success of the meeting. He, my daughter, and I dined at Breslin's Hotel at Bray afterwards. He was in capital spirits, and he talked about our younger days, and reminded me of many things I had forgotten. It was a starry night, and he talked to my daughter about the stars and about astrology. I had not seen him so pleasant for a long time. I never saw him again; he was dead within three weeks.'

One of the last letters he wrote was to his mother. Rumours had been circulated that he had treated her badly. He wrote :

'I am weary, dear mother, of these troubles, weary unto death; but it is all in a good cause. With health and the assistance of my friends I am confident of the result. The statements my enemies have so often made regarding my relations with you are on a par with the endless calumnies they shoot upon me from behind every bush. Let them pass. They will die of their own venom. It would indeed be dignifying them to notice their existence !'

The last public meeting Parnell attended was at Creggs on the 27th of September, 1891. He was then very ill. On the Saturday before the meeting he wrote to Dr. Kenny :

‘Morrison’s Hotel, Dublin : Saturday.

‘MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I shall be very much obliged if you can call over to see me this afternoon, as I am not feeling very well, and oblige

‘Yours very truly,

‘CHAS. S. PARNELL.

‘Don’t mention that I am unwell to anybody, lest it should get into the newspapers.’

He was suffering apparently from acute rheumatism and general debility. Dr. Kenny urged him not to go, but he said that he had given his word to the people, and that he would keep it. He was accompanied by Mr. Quin, of the National League. Two reporters—Mr. Hobson, of the ‘Freeman’s Journal,’ and Mr. Russell—travelled in the carriage with him. ‘I accompanied Mr. Parnell to Creggs on his last visit,’ says Mr. Hobson. ‘Quin was in the carriage with him ; he wore his arm in a sling. He sent Quin for me. I joined them. Russell was also with us, and we travelled on together. He talked about the defection of the “Freeman’s Journal,” and about the new paper he intended to start, “The Irish Daily Independent.” The whole conversation was on this subject, and he was very sanguine of success. I went to the meeting before Parnell had arrived. I got a warm reception. The people shouted: “Throw out the ‘Freeman’ reporter.” Things were getting hot for me when a burly figure forced its way through the crowd, and called out, “Where is the ‘Freeman’ reporter?” A number of angry voices answered “Here.” “Mr. Parnell wants him,” said the man. The man then beckoned to me, the people made way, and I walked towards him. We then went

to a public-house, where Parnell was seated in a room. He said: "I sent for you, as I thought you might like to have a talk with me before the meeting." The fact was he had heard that they were likely to make it hot for me, and resolved to take me under his wing.'

'I went,' says Mr. Russell, 'with Parnell to Creggs. He said, coming along in the train: "I am very ill. Dr. Kenny told me that I ought not to come, but I have promised these people to come, and I will keep my word!" We stopped at the same hotel. I remember one incident illustrating his superstition. He thought it unlucky to pass anyone on the stairs. I was descending the stairs as he was coming up, with a candlestick in his hand, going to bed. He had got up five or six steps when he saw me. He immediately went back, and remained at the bottom till I came down, and then wished me good-night. He spoke next day. It was raining, and someone raised an umbrella over his uncovered head, but he had it put down immediately. His speech was very laboured at the beginning—so much so that I took down the first part of it in long hand. Afterwards he brightened up and was better. I travelled back to Dublin with him next day at his request. He was very ill and suffered much pain, but he talked all the way and would not let me sleep. He said: "You can take a Turkish bath when you arrive in Dublin, and that will make you all right." We parted at Broadstone terminus, and I never saw him again.'

On arriving in Dublin, Parnell went to the house of his friend Dr. Kenny. There he remained for three days—September 28, 29, and 30—detained by business relating to the establishment of the new paper. He looked ill and fatigued, ate little, and suffered

from acute rheumatic pains in the hand and arm. Each day he said that he would start for England, but something arose to prevent him. At night he would lie on a sofa discussing the situation, talking hopefully of the future, and never appearing to realise the state of his health. 'It is only a matter of time,' he would say; 'the fight may be long or short, but we will win in the end.' On Wednesday, September 30, he attended a meeting of the promoters of the 'Irish Daily Independent.' He looked very poorly, and once felt so weak that some brandy had to be given to him. That night he left Ireland for the last time. Dr. Kenny urged him to remain, saying that he was unfit to travel, that he needed rest and medical treatment, and that the journey might aggravate the symptoms from which he suffered. 'Oh no,' said Parnell, 'I shall be all right. I shall come back next Saturday week.' On reaching London he took a Turkish bath, and then proceeded to his house, 10 Walsingham Terrace, Brighton. He complained that night of a chill, but made light of it. On Saturday he stayed in bed, and seemed to be somewhat better. On Sunday he was worse, and a local doctor was sent for. On Monday the symptoms were still grave, yet on Tuesday Sir Henry Thompson received a letter from him—the last, I think, he ever wrote. 'I cannot show you the letter,' said Sir Henry, 'because it is on professional matters, but I may say that it was well written, describing his symptoms clearly, and, so far as I could judge, bearing no traces of severe illness or suffering. I answered the letter immediately, but, I think, when it reached Brighton Parnell was dead.' Throughout Tuesday, October 6, Parnell suffered much. The rheumatic pains flew to his heart, he



became unconscious from time to time, rallied now and then, but at length, about midnight, expired.

In the forenoon of October 7 the tragic news reached London, causing a profound sensation in all circles. Everywhere it was recognised that one of the greatest figures in British or Irish politics for a century had vanished from the scene.

It was decided that there should be a public funeral, and that he should be buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. On Saturday, October 10, the remains were borne from Brighton to Willesden. At Willesden the van containing the coffin was shunted between two sidings, and there it remained for an hour until the arrival of the Irish train from Euston, to which it was then attached.

The platform was thronged by London Irish—men and women—who came to pay a fond tribute of respect to the great leader who would lead no more. ‘I shall come back on Saturday week,’ Parnell had said when leaving Dublin on Wednesday, September 30. He had kept his word. On Sunday morning, October 11, the ‘Ireland’ steamed into Kingstown bringing home the dead Chief. In the forenoon there was a Lying-in-state in the City Hall. In the afternoon, followed to his last resting-place by a vast concourse of people gathered from almost every part of the country, all that was mortal of Charles Stewart Parnell was laid in the grave, under the shadow of the tower which marks the spot where the greatest Irishman of the century—O’Connell—sleeps.

I shall not attempt to give an estimate of Parnell’s character. I prefer to let the only Englishman who was worthy of his steel bear witness to his greatness.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## AN APPRECIATION

IN December 1895 I wrote to Mr. Gladstone, saying that I was at work upon a life of Parnell, and that I would feel obliged if he would grant me the favour of an interview. He replied: 'I could not make any appointment except with the knowledge that my being able to keep it was a matter of certainty. I have a stronger reason. It is specially necessary for me to be cautious in touching anything associated with that name, that very remarkable, that happy and unhappy name. I shall be happy to give the best answer to any and every query you may think proper to send me by letter—and this, I feel sure, is the best answer I can make to your request.'

I immediately sent him the following queries:

'1. When did you begin to recognise the parliamentary capacity of Mr. Parnell?

'2. How did it manifest itself?

'3. To what do you ascribe Mr. Parnell's extraordinary ascendancy? Was he, in your judgment, a man of great intellectual power, or did his strength lie in his will?

'4. May I ask if any written communications passed between you and him about Irish matters?

‘ 5. May I ask whether you inquired or whether he caused to be made known to you his views of the Bill of 1886 ?

‘ 6. Have you had many interviews with Mr. Parnell ? and might I ask how many and under what circumstances, particularly anything you feel at liberty to say about the interview at Hawarden ?

‘ 7. May I ask whether you feel at liberty to express any opinion as to the legitimate effect on people’s minds of the moral conduct attributed to Mr. Parnell at the time of the proceedings in the Divorce Court, and what amount of difference was due to the supposed popular feeling ; and generally as to the sum of the impression made upon you by him, and as to the place you think he will hold, (1) in parliamentary history ; (2) in British history ; (3) in Irish history ? ’

Mr. Gladstone replied :

‘ Hawarden Castle, Chester : Dec. 11, 1895.

‘ My answers are as follows :

‘ 1, 2. During the early years of Mr. Parnell’s distinction I was absorbed in the Eastern Question, and in the main unaware of what was going on in Ireland. My real knowledge begins with the Parliament of 1880.

‘ 3, 4. This is rather too much a question of opinion ; but I will say to strength of will, self-reliance, and self-command, clear knowledge of his own mind, no waste in word or act, advantages of birth and education. His knowledge seemed small. I never saw a sign of his knowing Irish history. I have no recollection of any letters except when, after the assassination, he wrote to me offering to retire from Parliament. I replied, dissuading him from it.

'5. I learned Mr. Parnell's views on the Bill from his own mouth when he spoke first on it in Parliament.

'6. I had a short conversation with him in the hearing of others on the floor of the House in 1881. I remember no other before the Home Rule Bill.

'7. I had an opinion of my own upon this subject, but I thought it my duty not to state it, and I now think this silence was right and obligatory upon me. Until my last interview with him, which was at this place (I think late in 1890), I thought him one of the most satisfactory men to do business with I had ever known. But the *sum total* of any of my interviews on business with him must, I think, have been under two hours. He was wonderfully laconic and direct. I could hardly conceive his ever using an unnecessary word. His place is only in Irish history, outside of which for him there was no British or parliamentary history. On the list of Irish patriots I place him with or next to Daniel O'Connell. He was a man, I think, of more masculine and stronger character than Grattan.

'To clear up No. 5, I set the Home Rule question on foot exclusively in obedience to the call of Ireland, that call being in my judgment constitutional and conclusive.'

Learning early in 1897 that Mr. Gladstone was coming to London on his way to Cannes, I wrote again, asking him to give me a short interview. He replied saying that if I called upon him at 4 Whitehall Court at twelve o'clock on January 28 he would be glad to see me. I called at the appointed time. I had not seen him since 1890. He was much changed. He had aged greatly. His face had grown heavy and

massive, and his step had lost something of its old elasticity. Yet when I entered the room he rose from the table at which he was seated near the window, and crossed to meet me with an activity which was wonderful in a man of his years. 'I do not know,' he said, 'that I have much to tell you about Parnell, but I will answer fully every question you ask.' He then sat in an armchair close to the fire, and I drew near him. He was very deaf, and leaned eagerly forward to hear what I had to ask or say. He seemed to feel a keen interest in everything about Parnell, and as he recalled the events of the past eighteen years and talked about the Irish leader and the Irish movement one quickly forgot his years and became absorbed and delighted in his conversation. The face was lighted up by brilliant flashes of thought; the expression was varied, bright, beautiful; he spoke with energy and vehemence, and with an intonation which showed that his voice still retained something of its old charm.

I began the conversation by saying: 'May I ask when you first discovered that there was anything remarkable in Parnell?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'I must begin by saying that I did not discover anything remarkable in Mr. Parnell until much later than I ought to have discovered it. But you know that I had retired from the leadership of the Liberal party about the time that Parnell entered Parliament, and when I came back to public life my attention was absorbed by the Eastern Question, by Bulgaria, and I did not think much about Ireland. I do not think that Mr. Parnell or Irish matters much engaged my attention until we came back to Government in 1880. You see we thought that the Irish question was settled. There was the Church Act and

the Land Act, and there was a time of peace and prosperity, and I frankly confess that we did not give as much attention to Ireland as we ought to have done. Then, you know, there was distress and trouble, and the Irish question again came to the front.'

'Could you say what it was that first attracted your attention to Parnell?'

*Mr. Gladstone* (with much energy). 'Parnell was the most remarkable man I ever met. I do not say the ablest man; I say the most remarkable and the most interesting. He was an intellectual phenomenon. He was unlike anyone I had ever met. He did things and he said things unlike other men. His ascendancy over his party was extraordinary. There has never been anything like it in my experience in the House of Commons. He succeeded in surrounding himself with very clever men, with men exactly suited for his purpose. They have changed since, I don't know why. Everything seems to have changed. But in his time he had a most efficient party, an extraordinary party. I do not say extraordinary as an Opposition, but extraordinary as a Government. The absolute obedience, the strict discipline, the military discipline, in which he held them was unlike anything I have ever seen. They were always there, they were always ready, they were always united, they never shirked the combat, and Parnell was supreme all the time.' Then, with renewed energy: 'Oh, Parnell was a most remarkable man and most interesting. I don't think he treated me well at the end, but my interest in him has never abated, and I feel an intense interest in his memory now.' Then, striking the arm of his chair with his hand: 'Poor fellow! poor fellow! it was a terrible tragedy. I do believe firmly that if these divorce

proceedings had not taken place there would be a Parliament in Ireland to-day.'

I said: 'He suffered terribly during the last year of his life. The iron had entered his soul. I was with him constantly, and saw the agony of his mind, though he tried to keep it a secret from us all.'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Poor fellow! Ah! if he were alive now I would do anything for him.'

'May I ask, When did you first speak to Parnell?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Well, under very peculiar circumstances, and they illustrate what I mean when I speak of him as being unlike anyone I ever met. I was in the House of Commons, and it was in 1881, when, you know, we were at war. Parnell had made violent speeches in Ireland. He had stirred the people up to lawlessness. Forster had those speeches printed. He put them into my hands. I read them carefully. They made a deep impression on me, and I came down to the house and attacked Parnell. I think I made rather a strong speech (with a smile)—drew up rather a strong indictment against him, for some of the extracts were very bad. Well, he sat still all the time, was quite immovable. He never interrupted me; he never even made a gesture of dissent. I remember there was one declaration of his which was outrageous in its lawlessness. I read it slowly and deliberately, and watched him the while. He never winced, while the House was much moved. He listened attentively, courteously, but showed no feeling, no excitement, no concern. I sat down. He did not rise to reply. He looked as if he were the one individual in the House who was not a bit affected by what I said. The debate went on. After a time I walked out of the House. He rose from his seat, followed me, and coming up with much dignity

and in a very friendly way, said: "Mr. Gladstone, I should like to see those extracts from my speeches which you read. I should like particularly to see that last declaration. Would you allow me to see your copy?" I said, "Certainly," and I returned to the table, got the copy, and brought it back to him. He glanced through it quickly. Fastening at once on the most violent declaration, he said, very quietly: "That's wrong; I never used those words. The report is quite wrong. I am much obliged to you for letting me see it." And, sir (with vehemence), he was right. The report was wrong. The Irish Government had blundered. But Parnell went away quite unconcerned. He did not ask me to look into the matter. He was apparently wholly indifferent. Of course I did look into the matter, and made it right. But Parnell, to all appearances, did not care. That was my first interview with him, and it made a deep impression on me. The immobility of the man, the laconic way of dealing with the subject, his utter indifference to the opinion of the House—the whole thing was so extraordinary and so unlike what one was accustomed to in such circumstances.'

'You disapproved of Mr. Parnell's action after the passing of the Land Act in 1881?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Yes; I think he acted very badly then, and unlike what one would expect from him. He proposed to get up what he called test cases, to give the Act a fair trial, as he said. But the test cases were got up really to prevent the Act getting any trial at all. Well, I then took an extreme course. I put him into gaol. It was then I said (with a smile) that the resources of civilisation were not exhausted. I felt that if I did not stop him he would have stopped the Act.'



‘May I ask if you were in favour of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1881?’

*Mr. Gladstone.* ‘Ah, well, I don’t think I can go into that.’

I said: ‘I have seen Lord Cowper, and he told me that you were.’

*Mr. Gladstone.* ‘Ah! if Lord Cowper told you that, then I may talk about it. Yes, I was. Forster was quite mistaken at that time. He told me that the lawlessness was caused (scornfully) by village ruffians, and that if the Habeas Corpus Act were suspended he could lay his hands on them all, put them into gaol, and end the whole business. Why, it was absurd. The whole country was up, and well organised. It was not a case for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act at all, and I said so at the time. But Forster pressed the matter. Forster really acted badly in that business. He did not understand the nature of the Habeas Corpus Act. I will give you an example of what I mean. There was a doctor in Dublin. He was Medical Adviser to the Local Government Board. He afterwards became a member of Parliament. I think his name was Kenny. Forster put him in gaol under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, and he then dismissed him from his office under the Local Government Board. He never told me a word about it. Of course it was monstrous. He could put a man into gaol on suspicion, but he could not dismiss him from his post on suspicion. The first thing I heard of the matter was when an Irish member asked a question about it in the House of Commons. I was sitting next to Forster at the time. I turned round and said to him: “Why, you can’t do this. It is quite unwarrantable.” He said: “Well, I suppose you will get up and say so.” I said: “Indeed

I will," and I did. Now that is an instance of how little Forster knew about the Habeas Corpus Act. In fact, Forster (with a laugh), like a good many Radicals, had no adequate conception of public liberty.'

'May I ask under what circumstances was Parnell released from Kilmainham?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Yes, that is another point. What is this they call it? The Kilmainham treaty. How ridiculous! There was no treaty. There could not be a treaty. Just think what the Habeas Corpus Act means. You put a man into gaol on suspicion. You are bound to let him out when the circumstances justifying your suspicion have changed. And that was the case with Parnell.'

'When was your next communication with Mr. Parnell?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'In 1882, after the Phoenix Park murders. Parnell was, you know, greatly affected by those murders. They were a great blow to him. Those murders were committed on a Saturday. On Sunday, while I was at lunch, a letter was brought to me from Parnell. I was much touched by it. He wrote evidently under strong emotions. He did not ask me whether I would advise him to retire from public life or not. That was not how he put it. He asked me rather what effect I thought the murder would have on English public opinion in relation to his leadership of the Irish party. Well, I wrote expressing my own opinion, and what I thought would be the opinions of others, that his retirement from public life would do no good; on the contrary, would do harm. I thought his conduct in the whole matter very praiseworthy. I had a communication from Mrs. O'Shea about the same time. She wrote to ask me to call to see her. Well, she told me that she was a niece

of Lord Hatherley, and I called to see her. She said that a great change had come over Parnell with reference to myself personally and with reference to the Liberal party, and that he desired friendly relations with us. I said that I had no objection to friendly relations with him, and wished to meet him in a fair spirit.'

'Had you any written communications with Mrs. O'Shea?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'No, I wrote her no letters of importance. I wrote her letters acknowledging hers, as I have told you in the case of the first appointment. But all my communications with her were oral, and all my communications with Parnell were oral. I received only one letter from him, the letter after the Phoenix Park murders.'

'Was Parnell a pleasant, satisfactory man to do business with?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Most pleasant, most satisfactory. On the surface it was impossible to transact business with a more satisfactory man. He took such a thorough grasp of the subject in hand, was so quick, and treated the matter with so much clearness and brevity. It's a curious thing that the two most laconic men I ever met were Irishmen, Parnell and Archdeacon Stopford. When the Irish Church Bill was under consideration, Archdeacon Stopford wrote to me saying that he objected strongly to the Bill, but that he saw it was bound to pass, and that he thought the best thing for him to do was to communicate with me, and see if he could get favourable amendments introduced. He came to see me, and we went through the Bill together. Well, he was just like Parnell—took everything in at a glance, made up his mind quickly, and stated his own

views with the greatest simplicity and clearness. It was an intellectual treat to do business with Parnell. He only deceived me once. That was at our meeting at Hawarden in 1889. When the Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1886 he told me that he was indifferent on the question of the retention or the exclusion of the Irish members, that he was ready to give way to English opinion on the point, and that he would not endanger the Bill for it. Well, when he came to Hawarden in 1889 we talked over the new Home Rule Bill, and I then told him that I thought we would be obliged to retain the Irish members. He said nothing, remained perfectly silent, and so I gathered that he was of the same mind as in 1886 and left me quite a free hand on that point. But I learned subsequently that he had promised Mr. Rhodes to secure the retention of the Irish members.<sup>1</sup> Well, I do not want to lay too much stress upon it. As a rule, he was frank in his declarations and could be relied upon. I will give you an instance of what I mean. I was very anxious about the Royal Allowances Bill. I was not only anxious that the grant should be made, but that it should be unanimously and even generously made. The Irish members could not defeat the grant, but they could have obstructed and made difficulties, and deprived the measure of the grace which I wished it to have. I met Parnell in one of the division lobbies, and said to him: "The Prince of Wales is no enemy of Ireland; he is no enemy to any Irish policy which has the sanction of the masses of the Irish people." Parnell answered as usual in a few words. He said:

<sup>1</sup> On June 23, 1888, Parnell wrote a letter to Mr. Rhodes, which was published on July 7, 1888, stating that if Mr. Gladstone wished to retain the Irish members he would agree.

“I am glad to hear it. I do not think you need fear anything from us.” Well, I got Parnell and Sexton put on a committee which was appointed to consider the subject. Nothing could be better than Parnell’s conduct on that occasion. He showed the greatest skill, tact, and ability, and gave me the most efficient help at every turn. I always felt that I could rely on his word.’

‘Were there any of Parnell’s followers whom you would place with him?’

*Mr. Gladstone.* ‘There was no one in the House of Commons whom I would place with him. As I have said, he was an intellectual phenomenon.’

‘Who do you think was the cleverest member of his party?’

*Mr. Gladstone.* ‘Well, Healy was very clever; he made very clever speeches. I do not know what has become of him now, but under Parnell he was admirable. Of course, I have the profoundest respect for Justin McCarthy and Mr. Dillon. Dillon was useful, but Healy was very clever. I have heard Healy reply to a Minister on the spur of a moment—not a note, not a sign of preparation that I could see, all done with the greatest readiness and the greatest effect. The Land Bill of 1881 was a most complicated measure; only four members of the House understood it. Gibson understood it; Law, the Irish Attorney-General, understood it; Herschell, who was English Solicitor-General, threw himself into the subject with great zest and acquired a sound knowledge of it. But no one gained so complete a mastery of its details as Healy. He had them at his fingers’ ends.’

‘May I ask, when did you first turn your attention to Home Rule?’

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Well, you will see by a speech which I made on the Address in 1882 that I then had the subject in my mind. I said then that a system of Local Government for Ireland should differ in some important respects from any system of Local Government introduced in England or Scotland. Plunket got up immediately and said that I meant Home Rule. But I am bound to say that Gibson followed, and said that he did not put that construction upon my words. Well, I had to send an account of that speech to the Queen, and it led to a correspondence between us. More than this I cannot say on the subject. But I may add that I never made but one speech against Home Rule. That was at Aberdeen, soon after the movement was set on foot. I could not, of course, support Butt's movement, because it was not a national movement. I had no evidence that Ireland was behind it. Parnell's movement was very different. It came to this: we granted a fuller franchise to Ireland in 1884, and Ireland then sent eighty-five members to the Imperial Parliament. That settled the question. When the people express their determination in that decisive way, you must give them what they ask. It would be the same in Scotland. I don't say that Home Rule is necessary for Scotland. But if ever the Scotch ask for it, as the Irish have asked for it, they must get it. I am bound to say that I did not know as much about the way the Union was carried when I took up Home Rule as I came to know afterwards. If I had known as much I would have been more earnest and extreme. The union with Ireland has no moral force. It has the force of law, no doubt, but it rests on no moral basis. That is the line which I should always take, were I an Irishman. That is the line which as

an Englishman I take now. Ah! had Parnell lived, had there been no divorce proceedings, I do solemnly believe there would be a Parliament in Ireland now. Oh! it was a terrible tragedy.'

'May I ask if you considered that Parnell should have retired from public life altogether, or only from the leadership of the Irish party?'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'From public life altogether. There ought to have been a death, but there would have been a resurrection. I do not say that the private question ought to have affected the public movement. What I say is, it did affect it, and, having affected it, Parnell was bound to go. What was my position? After the verdict in the divorce case I received letters from my colleagues, I received letters from Liberals in the House of Commons and in the country, and all told the same tale: Parnell must go. All said it would be impossible for the movement to go on with him. Well, there was a meeting of the Federation at Sheffield; Morley and Harcourt were there. After the meeting they came to me and said: "Parnell must go. The movement cannot go on with him." I do not think that Harcourt had any convictions on the subject. I do not think that Morley had. Therefore they were unprejudiced witnesses, and their testimony, coming after the testimony of the others and in corroboration of it, was irresistible. I then took action. I wrote a private letter to Mr. Justin McCarthy, which I wished him to show to Parnell before the meeting of the party. I stated what I conceived to be the public opinion of England. I did exactly what Parnell had asked me to do in the case of the Phoenix Park murders. Well, that letter never reached Parnell. Why McCarthy did not give it to him I cannot say. Having failed to get at

Parnell in that way, I tried to get at him in another. I asked Morley to find him out; Morley tried, but he could not be found, he kept out of our way. Well, what was I to do under these circumstances, with English public opinion rising all the time? No resource was left to me but the public letter which I wrote to Morley. Then there was an end of everything. I think Parnell acted badly. I think he ought to have gone right away. He would have come back, nothing could have prevented him; he would have been as supreme as ever, for he was a most extraordinary man. Was he callous to everything? I never could tell how much he felt, or how much he did not feel. He was generally immovable. Indeed, immobility was his great characteristic. On some occasions, very rarely indeed, he would seem to be excited. In the House of Commons I would say to my colleagues: "Don't be mistaken; he is not excited, he is quite calm and completely master of himself."

I said: 'He was capable of great feeling, and he suffered intense pain during the last year of his life, though he tried to conceal it.'

*Mr. Gladstone.* 'Poor fellow! poor fellow! I suppose he did; dear, dear, what a tragedy! I cannot tell you how much I think about him, and what an interest I take in everything concerning him. A marvellous man, a terrible fall.'

With these words I close the story of Parnell's life. He brought Ireland within sight of the Promised Land. The triumph of the national cause awaits other times, and another Man.





# APPENDIX



## REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMISSION

### *Conclusions*

WE have now pursued our inquiry over a sufficiently extended period to enable us to report upon the several charges and allegations which have been made against the respondents, and we have indicated in the course of this statement our findings upon these charges and allegations, but it will be convenient to repeat seriatim the conclusions we have arrived at upon the issues which have been raised for our consideration.

I. We find that the respondent Members of Parliament collectively were not members of a conspiracy having for its object to establish the absolute independence of Ireland, but we find that some of them, together with Mr. Davitt, established and joined in the Land League organisation with the intention by its means to bring about the absolute independence of Ireland as a separate nation.

II. We find that the respondents did enter into a conspiracy by a system of coercion and intimidation to promote an agrarian agitation against the payment of agricultural rents, for the purpose of impoverishing and expelling from the country the Irish landlords, who were styled the 'English Garrison.'

III. We find that the charge that 'when on certain occasions they thought it politic to denounce, and did denounce, certain crimes in public, they afterwards led their supporters to believe such denunciation was not sincere' is not established. We entirely acquit Mr. Parnell and the other respondents of the charge of insincerity in their denunciation of the Phoenix Park murders, and find that the facsimile letter on which this charge was chiefly based as against Mr. Parnell is a forgery.

IV. We find that the respondents did disseminate the 'Irish World' and other newspapers tending to incite to sedition and the commission of other crime.

V. We find that the respondents did not directly incite persons to the commission of crime other than intimidation, but that they did incite to intimidation, and that the consequence of that incitement was that crime and outrage were committed by the persons incited. We find that it has not been proved that the respondents made payments for the purpose of inciting persons to commit crime.

VI. We find as to the allegation that the respondents did nothing to prevent crime and expressed no *bonâ fide* disapproval, that some of the respondents, and in particular Mr. Davitt, did express *bonâ fide* disapproval of crime and outrage, but that the respondents did not denounce the system of intimidation which led to crime and outrage, but persisted in it with knowledge of its effect.

VII. We find that the respondents did defend persons charged with agrarian crime, and supported their families, but that it has not been proved that they subscribed to testimonials for, or were intimately associated with, notorious criminals, or that they made payments to procure the escape of criminals from justice.

VIII. We find, as to the allegation that the respondents made payments to compensate persons who had been injured in the commission of crime, that they did make such payments.

IX. As to the allegation that the respondents invited the

assistance and co-operation of and accepted subscriptions of money from known advocates of crime and the use of dynamite, we find that the respondents did invite the assistance and co-operation of and accepted subscriptions of money from Patrick Ford, a known advocate of crime and the use of dynamite, but that it has not been proved that the respondents or any of them knew that the Clan-na-Gael controlled the League or was collecting money for the Parliamentary Fund. It has been proved that the respondents invited and obtained the assistance and co-operation of the Physical Force party in America, including the Clan-na-Gael, and in order to obtain that assistance abstained from repudiating or condemning the action of that party.<sup>1</sup>

The two special charges against Mr. Davitt, viz: (a) 'That he was a member of the Fenian organisation, and convicted as such, and that he assisted in the formation of the Land League with money which had been contributed for the purpose of outrage and crime;' (b) 'That he was in close and intimate association with the party of violence in America, and was mainly instrumental in bringing about the alliance between that party and the Parnellite and Home Rule party in America;' are based on passages in the 'Times' leading articles of the 7th and 14th March, 1887. 'The new movement was appropriately started by Fenians out of Fenian funds; its "father" is Michael Davitt, a convicted Fenian.' 'That Mr. Parnell's "constitutional organisation" was planned by Fenian brains, founded on a Fenian loan, and reared by Fenian hands.'

We have shown in the course of the report that Mr. Davitt was a member of the Fenian organisation, and convicted as such, and that he received money from a fund which had been contributed for the purpose of outrage and crime, viz. the Skirmishing Fund. It was not, however, for the formation of the Land League itself, but for the promo-

<sup>1</sup> The part omitted has been quoted in the text.

tion of the agitation which led up to it. We have also shown that Mr. Davitt returned the money out of his own resources.

With regard to the further allegation that he was in close and intimate association with the party of violence in America, and mainly instrumental in bringing about the alliance between that party and the Parnellite and Home Rule Party in America, we find that he was in such close and intimate association for the purpose of bringing about, and that he was mainly instrumental in bringing about, the alliance referred to.

ALL WHICH WE HUMBLY REPORT TO YOUR MAJESTY.

JAMES HANNEN.

JOHN C. DAY.

ARCHIBALD L. SMITH.

HENRY HARDINGE CUNYNGHAME,

*Secretary.*

ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE,  
13th February, 1890.

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